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DOCTRINAL PURITANS

AND

DIVINES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

JANUARY, 1846.

DOCTRINAL PURITANS

AND

DIVINES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

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CHRIST CRUCIFIED,

AND

WEAK GRACE VICTORIOUS,

BY

S. CHARNOCK, B.D.

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

DISCOURSES

ON

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

BY THE

REV. STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.

A.D. 1684.

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A DISCOURSE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—1 Cor. ii. 2.

The church of Corinth, to which the apostle directs this epistle, was a church as flourishing in gifts as any; yet as much crumbled into divisions, as eminent in knowledge. A year and six months the apostle had been conversant among them, planting and watering, with expectation of a plentiful harvest; but no sooner had he turned his back, but the devil steps in, and sows his tares. It was a church still, but divided; it had the evangelical doctrine, but too much choked with schismatical weeds.

1. Observe, the best churches are like the moon, not without their spots. The purest times had their imperfections; a pure state is not allowed to this, but reserved for another, world.

2. Church antiquity is a very unsafe rule. Other churches at some distance from the apostles were as subject to error as this. Pride and ambition were less like to keep out of them than out of Christ's family. Had the history of this church's practices and tenets, without this

corrective epistle of the apostle been transmitted to after-ages, they would have been used as a pattern : not the church, but scripture authority, is to be followed ; fathers must not be preferred before apostles ; church practices are no patterns, but as they are parallel to the grand and unerring rule.

The apostle, laying to heart the contentions among the Corinthians, draws up the whole doctrine he had before preached unto them, into a short epitome, but first declares the manner of his first carriage among them : " He came not to them with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto them the testimony of God," ver. 1.

To come with man's wisdom,

1. Would detract from the strength and excellency of the word, which, as the sun, shines best with its own beams. The Spirit's eloquence is most piercing and demonstrative, and quickly convinceth a man by its own evidence. Carnal wisdom charms the ear, but this strikes the heart.

2. It detracts from the glory of God, who is more honoured by the simplicity of the gospel, than luxuriances of wit. It was his honour, by the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, to nonplus the wisdom of the world ; and the glory of his wisdom as well as strength, to confound, by impotent and weak men, the power of Satan, which so long had possessed the hearts of the Corinthians.

3. It would be an argument of hypocrisy to use any other arguments than divine. Men in this would but seek themselves, not God's glory. It would be pride to think that their fancies could be more prevalent than evangelical reason ; and therefore the apostle would do nothing but endeavour to set out Christ in his own colours, as he

hung upon the cross, that their souls might be captivated to the obedience of a crucified Lord.

" I determined." I judged it most convenient for me, most profitable for you. It was a resolution taken up deliberately. It was not for want of the knowledge of those principles which are cried up in the world for true wisdom. I understand them as well as others; but what things I counted gain before, I now count loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and think it not worth the while and pains to make much inquiry about them.

" To know nothing," to believe nothing, to approve of nothing, to make known nothing.

1. Not your traditions, which have for themselves the plea of a venerable antiquity, and have been handed to you from your ancestors. What I chiefly determine to know is as ancient as the oldest of those mysteries you so much admire, even the " Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

2. Not your philosophical wisdom, so much admired by you and the rest of the world. I come not to teach you a doctrine from Athens, but from Jerusalem; and not so much from Jerusalem, as from heaven. I come to declare Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

3. Not your poets, wherein the chief mysteries of your religion are couched. I come to teach him to you, whom your sibyls and their prophetic writings pointed at long ago.

4. Nor your mysterious oracles, which had so long deluded the world; but I come to declare Him by whose death they were silenced.

"But Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Christ,—in the Deity and glory of his person; but also as crucified—in the ignominy of his passion, and the advantages of his office.

This is the sum of the gospel, and contains al the riches of it. Paul was so much taken with Christ, that nothing sweeter than Jesus could drop from his lips and pen. It is observed, that he hath the word "Jesus" five hundred times in his epistles.

Others understand it thus: I will know nothing but Jesus Christ, though he were crucified; I will boast of him, whom others despise.

"Among you,"—you Corinthians, though learned, though rich, I would not know any thing else among you than Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and the treasures of God.

Observe,

1. All human wisdom must be denied, when it comes in competition with the doctrine of Christ.

2. Christ and his death is the choicest subject for the wisest ear.

3. As all Christ, so especially his death, is the object of faith.

4. As all of Christ, so more especially his death in all the mysteries of it, ought to be the main subject of a christian's study and knowledge.

Doctrine, For the last, AS ALL OF CHRIST, SO MORE ESPECIALLY HIS DEATH IN ALL THE MYSTERIES OF IT, OUGHT TO BE THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF A CHRISTIAN'S STUDY AND KNOWLEDGE.

This is the honour of the gospel, and therefore the preaching of the gospel is called the preaching

of the cross, 1 Cor. i. 18. which should be considered by us,

I. In the first spring.

II. In the person suffering.

III. In the fruits of it.

I. In the first spring. His death was ordered by God.

Peter, as the president of the apostles, delivers it as the sense of the whole college of apostles then present. He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," Acts ii. 23. It was decreed and enacted in heaven, resolved before time, though done in the fulness of time. Therefore Christ is called "the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world:" determinately, in the counsel and decree of God; promissorily, in the promise and word of God passed to Adam after the fall; typically, in sacrifices which were settled immediately upon that promise of redemption; efficaciously, in regard of the merit of it, applied by God to believers, before the actual suffering. He was made sin, not by us, not only by himself and his own will, but by God's ordination; "He hath made him to be sin for us," 2 Cor. v. 21. by a divine statute, that is, he was ordained to be put into the state and condition of a sinner in our stead; not into the practical and experimental state of sin, but the penal state of a sinner, to be a sacrifice for it, not to be polluted with it. Indeed, had not God appointed it, it had not been meritorious; for the merit was not absolute for us, but according to the covenant and condition: it was capable of meriting, because of the worth and dignity of the person, but not actually meritorious

for us, but upon the covenant transacted between the Father and the Son; that it should be performed by him for us, and accepted by the Father for us, and applied by the Spirit to us.

And as it was appointed by God, it was,

1. An act of his sovereignty. Suppose God might have pardoned sin, and recovered man by his own absolute prerogative, had not his word been passed, that, in case of man's transgression, he should die the death. As a word created the earth, and cast it into such a beautiful frame and order, so by one word he might have restored man, and set him upon his former stock, and have for ever kept him from falling again, as he did the standing angels from ever sinning. Yet God chooseth this way, and is pleased with no other contrivance but this, and in a way of sovereignty he culls out his Son to be a sacrifice; and the Son putting himself into the state of a Surety and Redeemer, is said to have a command given him on the part of God as a Sovereign, "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do," John xiv. 31. and received by him as a subject, John x. 18. and as God owns him as his servant, Isa. xlii. 1. So he took upon him "the form of a servant," Phil. ii. 7. that is, the badge and livery of a servant; and the whole business he came upon, from his first breath to his last gasp, is called the will of God; and at the upshot he pleads his own obedience, in "finishing the work given him to do," as the ground of his expectations, and the glory promised him, John xvii. 4.

2. An act of the choicest love. God at the creation beheld man, a goodly frame of his own

rearing, adorned with his own image, beautified with his graces, embellished with holiness and righteousness, and furnished with a power to stand; and afterwards beheld him ungratefully rebelling against his Sovereign, invading his rights, and contemning his goodness, forfeiting his own privileges, courting his ruin, and sinking into misery. So blinded is his mind, as not to be able to find out a way for his own recovery; so perverse is his will, that instead of craving pardon of his Judge, he flies from him, and when his flight would not advantage him, he stands upon his own defence, and extenuates his crime; thus adding one provocation to another, as if he had an ambition to harden the heart of God against him, and render himself irrecoverably miserable. God so overlooks these, as in immense love and grace to settle a way for man's recovery, without giving any dissatisfaction to his justice, so strongly engaged for the punishment of the offence. And rather than this notorious rebel, and prodigious apostate, should perish according to his desert, he would transfer the punishment (which he could not remit without a violation of his truth, and an injury to his righteousness) upon a person equal to himself, most beloved by him, his delight from eternity, and infinitely dearer to him than any thing in heaven or earth. Herein was the emphasis of divine love to us, that "He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sin," 1 John iv. 10. It was love that he would restore man after the fall; there was no more necessity of doing this than of creating the world. As it added nothing to the happiness of God, so the want of it had detracted nothing from it. There was no more absolute

necessity of setting up man again after his breaking, than of a new repair of the world after the destructive deluge. But that he might wind up his love to the highest pitch, he would not only restore man, but rather than let him lie in his deserved misery, would punish his own Son, to secure man from it. It was purely his grace which was the cause that his Son "tasteth death for every man," Heb. ii. 9.

3. An act of justice. As his love to us proposed it, and Christ, out of his affection to the honour of the Father and our welfare, accepted it, and was willing to undertake for us, and interpose between us and divine wrath, to stand in our stead and bear our sins, so it was then an act of justice to inflict; for God, being the Governor of the world, the great Lawgiver, righteously exacting obedience from his rational creature, upon the transgression of his law becomes a Judge, and his justice as a Ruler demands the punishment due for the transgression to be inflicted upon the offender. To preserve the rights of justice, and to give a contenting answer to the cry of mercy; to wipe off, as I may say, the tears of one, and smooth the frowns of the other, "God lays our iniquity upon Christ," Isa. liii. 6. Christ takes the punishment upon himself, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and becomes responsible for our transgressions. And though he never sinned, nor stood indebted to God in his own person, yet, becoming our Surety, and being made under the law, putting himself in subjection to the law, and standing in our stead, he put himself also under the obligations of it to punishment. And thus the weight of the whole punishment,

due to man, was laid upon Christ by God as a just Judge. That which he could not have from the debtors, he might have from the Surety, who had put himself under that obligation of payment, and so was bound to undergo all those curses the law might have inflicted upon us; and pursuant to this obligation God imputed our iniquities to him, and punished them in him.

II. Consider the person suffering.

1. In regard of his dignity. The Son of God became man, the Lord of glory emptied himself. It was the Lord of angels that took upon him the nature of a servant; the Lord of life shed his blood. It was the Son of God who stooped down infinitely below himself into our nature, to be a sacrifice for our redemption; he that was greater than heaven, became meaner than a worm.

2. The willingness of his suffering. He being equal with the Father, could not be commanded to undertake this. He willingly consented, and willingly accomplished it. He was not driven, as the legal sacrifices were, to the altar. His enemies were not so desirous to make him a sufferer, as he himself was straitened till he was a sufferer, Luke xii. 50. The cup was as willingly drunk by him, as it was tempered by God; and his enemies did not so maliciously put him to shame, as he joyfully endured it, Heb. xii. 2. The desire that the cup might pass from him, was the struggle of his human nature, not an unwillingness in his person, or a repenting of his undertaking this office. It was a natural motion, evidencing the truth of his humanity, and the greatness of what he was to suffer.

3. The greatness of his suffering. His death

had all the ingredients of bitterness in it. It was a grievous punishment, because the holiness of God would not have been so manifested in a light one.

(1.) Ignominious. It was a death for slaves and malefactors; for slaves, whose condition rendered them most despicable, and for malefactors whose actions had rendered them most abominable. The Lord of heaven endured the punishment of a slave, and was numbered among transgressors. It is called "shame," Heb. xii. 2. Each suffering was sharpened with shame; he was buffeted, spit upon, wounded in his good name, accounted an impostor, the most odious terms of blasphemer, Beelzebub's agent, &c. were put upon the Son of God.

(2.) Cruel and sharp: lingering, not sudden; from his scourging by Pilate to his death was six hours, all that while in much torture; he suffered from Heaven, earth, hell, in his body, in his soul.

(3.) Accursed. As under God's blessing, all blessings are included, so under the notion of a curse, all punishment is contained, "he was made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13. There must be something more dreadful than a bare outward pain, or bodily punishment; Christ wanted not courage to support that, as well as the most valiant martyr; he bore the beginnings of it till he saw a black cloud between his Father and himself. This made him cry out, "My God, my God," &c. The agonies of Christ were more than the sufferings of all the martyrs, and all men in the world, since God laid upon him the sins of the whole world.

III. Consider the fruits of this death, which will render it worth our study.

1. The appeasing the wrath of God for us. God was willing to be appeased, (hence the sending of Christ is every where in Scripture ascribed to the love and grace of God;) but his justice was not actually appeased till the death of Christ. As a merciful God, he pitied us; but as a holy God, he could not but hate our transgression; as a God of truth, he could not but fulfil his own threatening; as a God of justice, he must avenge himself for the offence against him. He gave Christ as a God of mercy, and required satisfaction as a God of justice. "He set him forth as a propitiation, that he might be just," Rom. iii. 25, 26. His mercy rendered him placable, but his righteousness hindered the actual forgiveness. He had a kindness for man, but could not have a kindness for his sin; he had mercy for his creature to free him, but no mercy for his transgression to let that go unpunished. That justice whereby he can no more absolve the guilty, than condemn the innocent, was an obstacle to the full issues of his mercy. But when an offering for sin was made by an infinite person, and our near kinsman, who had a right of redemption; there was no plea in justice against it, since the sacrifice was complete; no plea in divine veracity, since the penalty was suffered; no plea in divine holiness, since that was infinitely manifested; no bar to mercy's coming, smiling upon the world. The wrath of God was appeased upon the death of the Redeemer, and this reconciliation is actually applied upon the acceptance of the believer. If God had not been placable, he had never accepted

a substitute; and if he had not been appeased, he had never raised this substitute after his passion, nor ever held out his hand of grace to invite us to be reconciled to him. There is nothing now remains to be done, but our consenting to those terms upon which he offers us the actual enjoyment of it. This crucified Redeemer only was able to effect this work. He was an infinite person, consisting of a divine and human nature: the union of the one gave value to the suffering of the other. The word of God was past in his threatening; his justice would demand its right of his veracity; a sacrifice there must be, to repair the honour of God by bearing the penalty of the law, which could not be done by the strength and holiness of any creature. All the created force in the earth, and the strongest force of the angelical nature, were too feeble for so great a task. Justice must have satisfaction; the sinner could not give it without suffering eternal punishment. He then puts himself into our place, to free us from the arrest of justice, and bear those strokes, which, by virtue of the law, wrath had prepared for us. The dignity of his person puts a value upon his punishment, and renders it acceptable for us, it being a death superior in virtue to the death of worlds; it was a death which justice required, and at the sight of it justice was so calmed, that the sharp revenging sword drops out of its hand. God hath smelt in it so sweet a savour, that hath fully pleased him. He can now pardon the sins of believers with the glory of his righteousness as well as of his grace. He can legally justify a repenting sinner. God hath been served in the passion of the Redeemer, his justice

and holiness were glorified, and the law accomplished, the honour of God is preserved, and the author of the law righted, the justice of God sweetened. By this propitiation for sin, God is rendered propitious to guilty man, and stretches out his arms of love, instead of brandishing his sword of vengeance. The ancient believers lived in the expectation of this, but they beheld not the consummation of it; they thirsted for it, but were not satisfied with it, till the fulness of time. It solely depended upon the passion of Christ; it is by the cross that God is reconciled, and all enmity slain, Eph. ii. 14. He was then wounded for our iniquities, and being cast into the furnace of divine wrath, quenched the flames; as Jonah the type, being cast into the raging sea, quelled the storm. He bore our sins by bearing the wrath due to them, and satisfied justice by suffering its strokes. It could not stand with that justice to punish him, if he were not placed in our stead to be the mark and butt of that justice for us and our sins. Doth not then a crucified Christ deserve to be known and studied by every one of us, who hath done that upon the cross, which the holy law, sacrifices divinely instituted, the blessed angels, the purity and strength of universal nature, had never been able to effect? He hath expiated our sins, and by his blood hath secured us from the sword of divine vengeance, if we refuse not the atonement he hath made.

2. Silencing the law. Christ crucified, by satisfying the justice of God, brake the thunders of the law, and dissolved the frame of all its anathemas: Being made a curse for us, he hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13

that is, from the sentence of the Law-giver, denounced in his law against the transgressors of it; so that now "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1. because they are "dead to the law by the body of Christ," Rom. vii. 4. By the body of Christ as slain and raised again; for this hand-writing of ordinances, which was contrary to us, is taken out of the way by God, being nailed to his cross, Col. ii. 14. He hath abolished the obligation of the moral law, as to any condemning power, it being the custom to cancel bonds anciently by piercing the writing with a nail. The ceremonial law was abolished in every regard, since the substance of it was come, and that which it tended to was accomplished; and so one understands, "having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly," ver. 15. of the ceremonies of the law, called principalities and powers in regard of the divine authority whereby they were instituted. These he spoiled, as the word signifies, unclothing or unstripping, he unveiled them, and showed them to be misty figures that were accomplished in his own person. The flower falls when the fruit comes to appear; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, grace to obey the precepts, and truth to take away the types. But it is also meant of the condemning power of the moral law, which was nullified by the death of Christ, who, upon his cross sealing another covenant, repealed the former. The settling a new covenant implies the dissolution of the old. That was nailed to his cross which was contrary to us, a law that was a charge against us, and by virtue whereof we are sued; and this was the law as

sentencing us to death, which was pierced and torn by those nails, that did discover that debt, and denounce the sentence, which cannot be meant so properly of the ceremonial, as the moral law. The ceremonial law of sacrifices was the gospel in shadows, and appointed for the relief of men, and as a ground whereon to exercise their faith till the appearance of the substance, and therefore cannot be said to be contrary to us, but an amicable discovery, that we were to have that relief in another, which we wanted in ourselves, and that we were to be freed from the sentence of death by some grand sacrifice represented by those sacrifices of animals. Besides, the apostle writes this as a cordial, issuing out of the blood of Christ to the Gentile Colossians, who never were under the obligation of the ceremonial law, that being appropriated to the Jews. The apostle brings it to back his assertion, that their trespasses were forgiven. The argument had been of no use to the Gentiles, who sinned not against the ceremonial law, but the moral law; and if one only had been cancelled, and not the other, the Jews themselves, whose offences were most against the moral law, had had little or no comfort in having the fewest of their sins forgiven. Our Saviour died by the power and force of the moral law; that brought him to the cross, for the fulfilling it in its penalty, as well as he had done in his life by his obedience: and he receiving the full execution of its sentence upon himself on the cross, as a substitute in our place, nullified that sentence as to any force upon those who believe in him. The plea against it is, that it hath already been executed, though not upon our

persons, yet upon our Surety; so that being nailed to his cross, the virtue of his cross must cease, before the killing power of the law can revive. This crucified Christ, who disarmed the law of its thunders, defaced the obligation of it as a covenant, and, as it were, ground the stones, upon which it was written, to powder, is worth our exact knowledge, and studious inquiry.

3. Upon this must follow the removal of guilt. If God the Judge of the world be appeased and satisfied, and the law, upon which our accusation is grounded, and which is the testimony of our debt, be cancelled, the removal of our guilt must necessarily follow. And this forgiveness of sin is the chief and principal part of our redemption, and ascribed to his blood as the procuring cause, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." Eph. i. 7. He bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, there necessarily follows a discharge of every believer from them. The payment made by the Surety, is a discharge of the principal debtor from the pursuit of the creditor. As he took away the curse from us by being made a curse, so he took away sin from us by being made sin for us. The taking away the sins of the world was the great end of his coming. There had been no need of his assuming our nature, and exposing himself to such miseries for our relief, had we been only in a simple misery, for then we might have been rescued by his strength; but, being in a sinful misery, we could not be relieved but by his sacrifice to remove our guilt, as well as by his strength to draw us out of our gulf. Our sin was a bar upon the treasures of divine blessings; this must

be removed before those could be opened for us, and could not righteously be removed by bare power, but by a full payment and satisfaction of the debt. It is a violent oppression to free a creditor from the hands of a debtor by force, it is righteous only when it is by legal payment. Well then, "Christ was made sin for us," 2 Cor. v. 21. and that in his death upon the cross; to what end? that sin might remain in its guilt upon us? No, for him to be made sin, and that by God, without respect to the taking away of sin, had been inconsistent with the wisdom and righteousness of God. The justice of God would not permit him to take our debt of another, and yet to charge it upon ourselves. "He was therefore made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in or by him." He was made sin, that we might be counted without sin by the imputation of the righteousness of the Mediator to us, as if it were our own; that as he represented our persons, and bore our penalty, we might likewise receive the advantages of his righteousness for the acquittal of our debts, the sin of our nature, and the sin of our persons, the removal of the guilt contracted by Adam, and imputed to us, and the guilt contracted by ourselves. For it is of "many offences unto justification," Rom. v. 16. He was the true person figured by the scape-goat that took away our sins, and carried them into a land of forgetfulness, where none dwells to take notice of them, and censure us to death for the crimes. Is not then this crucified Christ worth the knowing, who took such heavy burdens upon his own shoulders, that they might not oppress ours; and suffered as a victim in the

place of our guilty persons, to obtain an eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix. 14. He that gives so great a ransom for us, as that of his life and precious blood, rather than we should remain in our chains, deserves the choicest place in our understanding as well as affections. Were it a bare deliverance, it would challenge this: but he is said not only to deliver us, which speaks power, but to redeem us, which speaks price, and a buying what was past into the possession of another; a payment of that which we were never able to pay.

4. Another fruit is, the conquest of Satan. The empire the devil exercised over man, did not arise from any dignity in his person, or any right he had to him in himself, but it was first founded on sin, and granted to him by the justice of God, and was not the power of a prince, but of an executioner. Had not sin first opened the door, his venom could not have infected us, nor his power have hurt us. He could never have been our accuser without some matter of charge from us: nor ever have been our executioner, had we not fallen under the hands of divine justice. His power is erected upon our crimes, whereby he becomes the minister of divine vengeance. But a crucified Christ hath bruised the head of this old serpent, and wounded the prince of this world! he hath displaced him from his power, snatched from him the ground of his indictments, by cancelling the law upon which his accusations are founded; and despoiled him of his office, by satisfying divine justice, which conferred an authority upon him of executing divine vengeance; "the accuser of the brethren is cast out," Rev. xii 10. and "destroyed him that had the power of death," and

that through his own death, Heb. ii. 14, 15. That the devil had not a total power over Adam, after the fall, proceeded from the intervention of this Surety, and the absolute credit of his future victory over him. Yet that promise, that the serpent's head should be bruised, did not, through the weakness of their faith, and the long delay of performance, preserve them from the fear of death; notwithstanding that, they were all their life-time subject to bondage; for since the devil's empire was reared upon the ruins of men by sin, he could continually object to them that their sins were not expiated, that death remained as a punishment of sin; but the cross of Christ hath disarmed him of this weapon; his grand plea, whereby he kept men in a servile fear, is completely answered. In bruising our Saviour's heel by the death on the cross, he felt a fatal blow on his head, his conqueror got above him out of his reach, without any hope left in him to touch his heel again. The devil's right was legally taken from him by Christ's death on the cross; the foundation of his authority, namely sin, was taken away. He was destroyed, (that is the apostle's expression,) not in his person, but in his authority; he was irrecoverably expelled from his dominion which he had by his false oracles usurped over the world, John xii. 31. and it is by this crucified Christ, that we are more than conquerors over him. And should we not know this crucified Christ, who hath weakened the venom of the serpent, broke the force of the tempter, vanquished him on the cross by the merit of his blood, and conquers him in us by the efficacy of his Spirit.

5. Sanctification is another fruit of the cross of Christ. To be delivered from the guilt of sin, that bound us over to punishment, had been a great favour; but it would not have been a perfect favour, without being delivered from the venom of sin that had infected our nature. Though God willed man good by a love of good will, yet he could not delight in him with a love of complacency, if the contagion and filth of sin had deformed and sullied our souls as much as before; if our guilt were only removed, we had been freed from punishment, but without restoring the divine image, we had not been fit for any converse with God. It was necessary that our souls should be washed, and our faculties put into a state to serve in some measure the glory of God, and the end of our creation. God would have seemed to deny his own holiness, if he had regarded only the reverence of his justice, by appointing a sacrifice for atonement, and not consulted the honour of the other, by renewing his image in the nature of man. But this is purchased by the death of Christ; "He came by water and blood," 1 John v. 6. by blood to expiate our sins, and by water to purify our souls, answerable to the Jewish state wherein it was typified, where there were sacrifices for guilt, and washings for filth. These two things come to us by the death of Christ, the remitting our crime, and the removing of our spot. He gave himself, that he might save us, Eph. v. 25. Titus ii. 14. when he came to purchase the blessings we had forfeited, he would not omit this, which was one of the chief. By him the conscience is purged from dead works, from sin which brought

death, and being worse than a pollution by a dead body, hindered us from access to God, as that did from an entrance into the temple. He hath broken our chains, as well as blotted out our crimes; healed our natures, as well as procured our pardon; purchased our regeneration, as well as remission. It is by his cross that the old man, which had incorporated himself with our souls, is crucified, Rom. vi. 6. By this he gained the power of sending a saving spirit, which had not entered into our souls, had not Christ's blood flowed out of his veins. The effusion of this blood, was the cause of the effusion of the Spirit; it was shed upon us through Christ alone. He hath, by suffering for sin on the cross, rendered it a detestable thing, and shewed how dreadful that is, that could not receive its fatal wound, without a wound first in the heart of the Son of God. This is the most powerful motive to quicken us to a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness, and his life the most illustrious pattern; but all this had been of little efficacy to us, had not the water of the Spirit flowed out from the rock, when it was struck, to cleanse the filthiness of our souls. This is given, upon the account of his death, to believers, to purify their hearts from the mud of the world, and to form them to a new life for the honour of God; and it is not denied to those who will ask, and seek, and knock, Luke xi. 13. Had Christ only purchased remission without sanctification, it had not been for the honour of God's holiness, nor would our condition have been elevated; heaven had been no place for defilements or slaves. It was necessary the filth of sin should be removed, the dominion of sin be abolished,

that we might as holy persons approach to God and as free men converse with God. Is not a crucified Christ then worth the knowing, who hath not only destroyed Satan our enemy without us, but can destroy sin our enemy within us? As he hath snatched us from punishment by expiating our sins, so he can bring us to communion with God, by razing evil habits out of our hearts: without this latter, we are not capable of enjoying a complete benefit by the former.

6. Opening heaven for us. What is this life but a wallowing in a sink, a converse in the dregs of the creation, in an earth polluted by the sin of man, wherein we every day behold fresh affronts of God, and find motions in us dishonourable to ourselves? But Christ by his death hath provided a better place than this, yea, a place more glorious than Adam's Paradise, which was designed for our habitation by the first creation. A place, not only built by the word of God, but cemented and prepared by the blood of Christ. By the law against sin, we were to have our bodies reduced to dust, and our souls lie under the sentence of the wrath of God. But our crucified Saviour hath purchased the redemption of our body, to be evidenced by a resurrection, Rom. viii. 23. and a standing security of our souls in a place of bliss, to which believers shall have a real ascent, and in which they shall have a local residence, which is called the purchased possession. As Adam brought in the empire of death, so Christ hath brought in the empire of life, Rom. v. 17. shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. He hath not purchased for us a paradisiacal life, or restored us to the mutable state wherein Adam

was created; he hath not linked us for ever to the the earth, and the use of the creatures for our support; he hath purchased for us an eternal life, and prepared for us eternal mansions; not only to have the company of men, or the society of the blessed angels, but to be blessed with the vision of God, to reside in the same place, where his glorified person is adored by the happy spirits, to live with him, Rom. vi. 8. a life, wherein our understandings shall be freed from mists, and our wills from spots, and our affections from disorder. We lost a paradise by sin, and have gained a heaven by the cross. And should not this crucified Christ be studied, who hath settled the regions above for our reception, and procured an entrance into that place, which justice, by reason of our sin, had else made for ever inaccessible to us?

I might mention more; as, the establishment of the covenant, access to God, perseverance, and the conquest of the world.

Use.—1. Let us be thankful to God for a crucified Redeemer.

There is nothing in heaven or earth such an amazing wonder as this; nothing can vie with it for excellence. All love and thankfulness is due to God, who hath given us his Son, not only to live, but to die for us a death so shameful, a death so accursed, a death so sharp, that we might be repossessed of the happiness we had lost. All love and thankfulness is due to Christ, who did not only pay a small sum for us as our surety, but bowed his soul to death, to raise us to life, was numbered among transgressors, that we might have a room among the blessed. Our crimes merited our sufferings, but his own mercy made

him a sufferer for us; for us he sweat those drops of blood, for us he trod the wine-press alone, for us he assuaged the rigour of divine justice, for us, who were not only miserable, but offending creatures, and overwhelmed with more sins to be hated, than with misery to be pitied. He was crucified for us by his love, who deserved to die by his power, and laid the highest obligation upon us, who had laid the highest offences upon him. This death is the ground of all our good; whatever we have, is a fruit that grew upon the cross. Had he not suffered, we had been rejected for ever from the throne of God; salvation had never appeared, but by those groans and agonies. By this alone was God pleased, and our souls for ever made happy; without it, he had been for ever displeased with us, we had been odious and abominable in his sight, and could never have seen his face. Nothing is such an evidence of his love as his cross; the miracles he wrought, and the cures he performed in the time of his life, were nothing to the kindness of his death, wherein he was willing to be accounted worse than a murderer in his punishment, that he might thereby effect our deliverance. If he had given us the riches of this world and a greater, had he given us the honour of angels, and made us barons of heaven, without exposing himself to the cross to accomplish it, it had been a testimony of his affection, but destitute of so endearing an emphasis. The manner of procuring is more than a bare kindness in bestowing it; he testified his resolution, not only to give us glory, but to give it us whatsoever it should cost him, and would stick at nothing rather than we should want it. The

angels in heaven in their glistering lustre, are the monuments of his liberality, but not of so supreme an affection as is engraven on the body of his cross.

2. Let us delight in the knowledge of Christ crucified, and be often in the thought and study of him. Study Christ, not only as living, but dying, not as breathing in our air, but suffering in our stead; know him as a victim, which is the way to know him as a conqueror. Christ crucified is the great object of faith. All the passages of his life, from his nativity to his death, are passed over in the creed without reciting, because, though they are things to be believed, yet the belief of them is not sufficient without the belief of the cross; in that alone was our redemption wrought. Had he only lived, he had not been a Saviour. If our faith stop in his life, and do not fasten upon his blood, it will not be a justifying faith. His miracles, which prepared the world for his doctrine; his holiness, which fitted himself for his suffering, had been insufficient for us, without the addition of the cross. Without this, we had been under the demerit of our crimes, the venom of our natures, the slavery of our sins, and the tyranny of the devil; without this, we should for ever have had God for our enemy, and Satan for our executioner; without this, we had lain groaning under the punishment of our transgressions, and despaired of any smile from Heaven. It was this death, which as a sacrifice appeased God, and as a price redeemed us; nothing is so strong to encourage us; nothing so powerful to purify us; how can we be without thinking of it? The world we live in had fallen

upon our heads, had it not been upheld by the pillar of the cross; had not Christ stepped in and promised a satisfaction for the sin of man. By this all things consist; not a blessing we enjoy, but may put us in mind of it: they were all forfeited by our sins, but merited by his precious blood. If we study it well, we shall be sensible how God hated sin and loved a world; how much he would part with to restore a fallen creature. He showed an irresistible love to us, not to be overcome by a love to his own dear Son.

(1.) This will keep up life in our repentance. We cannot look upon Christ crucified for us, for our guilt, and consider that we had deserved all that he suffered, and that he suffered not by our entreaty, nor by any obligation from us, but merely from his own love, but the meditation of this must needs melt us into sorrow. Should we not bleed as often as we seriously thought of Christ's bleeding for us? You cannot see a malefactor led to execution for a notorious crime, but you have some detesting thoughts of the fact, as well as some motions of pity to the person. A strong meditation on Christ will excite compassion for his sufferings, but a detestation of our sins and selves as the cause of them. It is a look upon Christ pierced, that pierceth the soul, Zech. xii 10. Would not this blood acquaint us, that the malignity of sin was so great, that it could not be blotted out by the blood of the whole creation? Would it not astonish us, that none had strength enough to match it, but one equal with God? Would not such an astonishment break out into penitent reflections? Would not the thoughts of this make us emulate the vail of the temple, and

be ashamed that it should outstrip us in rending, while our hearts remain unbroken? Should we not be confounded, that a lifeless earth should shake in the time of his sufferings, while our reasonable souls stand immovable? Could any of the Israelites, that understood the nature and intent of sacrifices, be without some penitent motions while they saw the innocent victim slain for their sin, not for any fault of its own? and should we be unmelted, if we considered the cross, the punishment of our crimes, not any of his?

(2.) It would inspirit our faith, when we shall see his blood confirming an everlasting covenant, wherein God promises to be gracious. All the promises centered in the cross, received their life from his death, and are from thence reflected on us. Where can faith find a vigour, but in the royalties of mercy, displayed in the satisfaction of justice? where can it find a life, but in the views of its proper object? When we behold a Christ crucified, how can we distrust God, that hath in that, as a plain tablet, written this language, "that he will spare nothing for us, since he hath not spared the best he had?" What greater assurance can he give? where is there any thing in heaven or earth, that can be a greater pledge of his affection?

(3.) This will animate us in our approaches to God. Not only a bare coming, but a boldness and confidence in coming to God, was purchased by a crucified Christ, Heb. x. 19. God was before averse from man, and man unwilling to approach to God. Now God invites, and man may come; man calls, and God answers. What can be more encouraging than to consider, that by his

blood he hath made us kings and priests to God, Rev. v. 9, 10. to offer up sacrifices with a royal spirit, since the curse which should have fallen upon our heads, has been borne by him? We should think of it every time we go to God in prayer; it was by this death the throne of God was opened. This will chase away that fear that disarms us of our vigour. It will compose our souls to offer up delightful petitions. It is in this only we see the face of God appeased towards us.

(4.) This will be a means to further us in a progress in holiness. An affection to sin, which cost the Redeemer of the world so dear, would be inconsistent with a sound knowledge and serious study of a crucified Saviour. We should see no charms in sin, which may not be overcome by that ravishing love, which bubbles up in every drop of the Redeemer's blood. Can we with lively thoughts of this, sin against so much tenderness, compassion, grace, and the other perfections of God, which sound so loud in our ears from the cross of Jesus? Shall we consider him hanging there to deliver us from hell, and yet retain any spirit to walk in the way which leads thereto? Shall we consider him upon the cross, unlocking the gates of heaven, and yet turn our backs upon that place he was so desirous to purchase for us, and give us the possession of? Shall we see him groaning in our place and stead, and dare to tell him, by our unworthy carriage, that we regard him not, and that he might have spared his pains? It must be a miserable soul, worse than brutish, that can walk on in ways of enmity, with a sense of a crucified Christ in his mind. Could we then affect that sin which appears so horrible in the

doctrine of the cross? Can we take any pleasure in that which procured so much pain to our best Friend? Can we love that which hath brought a curse, better than him who bore the curse for us? For want of this study of Christ crucified we walk on in sin, as if he suffered to purchase a license for it, rather than the destruction of it. The due consideration of this death would incline our wills to new desires and resolutions. It would stifle that luxury, ambition, worldliness, which harass our souls. We should not dare to rush into any iniquity through the wounds of Christ. We should not, under a sense of his dying groans, cherish that for which he suffered. We should not do the works of darkness under the effusions of his blood, if we did, in a serious posture, set ourselves at the feet of his cross.

(5.) This will be the foundation of all comfort. What comfort can be wanting, when we can look upon Christ crucified as our Surety, and look upon ourselves as crucified in him, when we can consider our sins as punished in him, and ourselves accepted by virtue of his cross? It was not an angel which was crucified for us, but the Son of God; one of an equal dignity with the Father; one who shed blood enough to blot out the demerit of our crimes, were they more than could be numbered by all the angels of heaven, if all were made known to them. He was not crucified for a few, but for all sorts of offences. When we shall see judgments in the world, what comfort can we take without a knowledge and sense of a crucified Christ? What a horror is it for a condemned man to see the preparation of gibbets, halters, and executioners! But when he shall

see a propitiation made for him, the anger of the prince atoned, the law some other way satisfied, and his condemnation changed into remission; all his former terrors vanish, and a sweet and pleasing calm possesses him. With this knowledge and sense, we should not be much terrified at the approaches of death in our last gasps; when we consider itself gasping under the weight of the cross. The blood of Christ is as a balsam dropped upon the points of the arrows of death. That by removing the guilt of sin, pulled out the sting of death. When we tremble under a sense of our sins, the terrors of the Judge, and the curses of the law, let us look upon a crucified Christ, the remedy of all our miseries. His cross hath procured a crown, his passion hath expiated our transgression. His death hath disarmed the law, his blood hath washed a believer's soul. This death is the destruction of our enemies, the spring of our happiness, the eternal testimony of divine love. We have good reason, as well as the apostle, to determine with ourselves, "to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and especially him crucified."

A DISCOURSE

OF

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.—1 CORINTHIANS v. 7.

THE words are a reason of the apostle's exhortation to the Corinthians to cast out the incestuous person, in regard of the contagion, which might be, by so ill an example, dispersed to others, as a leaven spreads in vapours through the whole lump: "Know you not, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" ver. 6. And having used this similitude of leaven, he pursues it in allusion to the custom of the Jews before the celebration of the passover, according to the command, to have no leaven found in their houses at that time, upon the penalty of being cut off from the congregation of Israel; and with respect to the true design of that ceremonial injunction, exhorts the Corinthians to purge out the old leaven, namely, that person from their society, lust from their hearts, every member of the old Adam, that they might be a new lump answering their holy and heavenly calling. The reason of this exhortation is in the words, "For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," and by his death hath taken away the sin of the world. As the sacrifice of the paschal lamb represented the sacrifice of Christ, so the manner

wherein the Israelites celebrated that solemnity with unleavened bread, represents the manner wherewith we ought to celebrate the death of the Redeemer of the world. As therefore our true passover, which is the Lord Jesus, hath been sacrificed for us, let us daily celebrate the memory of it in a manner worthy of so great a grace. As therefore the Jews abstained from all leaven in the time of the figure, let us not only abstain from, but purge out, all things contrary to God, because for this end Christ was sacrificed for us. As the passover was a type of Christ, so the unleavened bread was a type of christians, and of their innocence and purity of life. And that because you are unleavened by law, you ought to be so: for that is said in Scripture sometimes to be in fact, which ought to be; as, the priest's lips preserve knowledge, that is, ought to preserve knowledge. "Purge out" is very emphatical, and means, Purge it out wholly, that nothing may be left in you, that you may be such as a new lump did figuratively signify.

"Christ our passover." The institution of this solemn figure is particularly set down, Exod. xii. 3—5, &c. It was appointed by God as a memorial both of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt, and their deliverance from it. After they had been about two hundred years in that country, God, mindful of his promise, sets upon their delivery, and since all the former miracles had proved unsuccessful for the bending Pharaoh's heart to give the captives liberty to depart, God designs the slaying of the first-born of every Egyptian family, and thereby sending the greatest strength of the nation to another world.

Upon this occasion he orders the Israelites, by Moses, to slay the lamb the fourteenth day of the first month, (which answers to our March,) and to sprinkle the posts of their doors with the blood, and to feast upon the flesh of it in their several families; and that night the angel comes, and mortally strikes every first-born, none escaping, but those who observed this command of God, and had sprinkled their door-posts with the blood of the slain lamb; every house besides, being made that night a house of mourning. It was an earnest of the Israelites' deliverance, and the Egyptians' calamity.

Observe 1. God's greatest mercies to his church, are attended with the greatest plagues upon their enemies. The salvation of man is the destruction of sin and the devil: the passover was the salvation of Israel, and ruin of Egypt.

2. God provides for the security of his people, before he lays his wrathful hand upon their adversaries. He provided a Moses to conduct them, an ordinance to comfort and refresh them, before he shoots his arrows into the Egyptians' hearts. God settles this passover as a standing ordinance in the church; a feast throughout their generations, to be kept by an ordinance for ever, Exod. xii. 14. so that it was not only a memorial of a past and temporal deliverance, but the type of a future and spiritual one. As all the sacrifices were types of what was to be performed in the fulness of time, in the person of the Messiah; so this was a great and signal type, and had its truth, reality, and efficacy, in the death of the Redeemer.

"Christ the passover," that is, the paschal

lamb. The lamb was called the passover; the sign for the thing signified by it, 2 Chron. xxxv. 11. "And they killed the passover," that is, the lamb; for the passover was properly the angel's passing over Israel, when he was sent as an executioner of God's wrath upon the Egyptians, So Matt. xxvi. 17. "Where shall we prepare for for thee to eat the passover?" that is, the paschal lamb.

"Our passover:" our paschal lamb. He is called God's lamb, John i. 29. God's in regard of the author, ours in regard of the end; God's lamb in regard of designation, ours in regard of acceptation.

"Our passover." Not only of the Jews but of the Gentiles; that was restrained to the Israelitish nation, this extends in the offers of it to all, and belongs to all that are under the new administration of the covenant of grace.

"For us." Not only for our good, but in our stead, to free us from eternal death, to purchase for us eternal life: sacrifices were substituted in the place of the transgressor, and received the stroke of death which his sin had merited. The title of the paschal lamb is given here to Christ, not only in regard of his meekness and innocence, but in regard of his being a sacrifice, whence he is called the lamb slain, Rev. v. 12. the "lamb that redeems us by his blood," 1 Pet. i. 19. Here we have,

I. A description of Christ in the type, passover.

II. The end of his death.

Three doctrines may be observed from the words.

Doct. 1. CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER.

Doct. 2. CHRIST IS A SACRIFICE.

Doct. 3. CHRIST IS A SACRIFICE IN OUR STEAD.

Doct. 1. CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER. In allusion to this, he is so often called a lamb, as also in allusion to the lambs offered in the daily sacrifice; but especially in relation to the paschal lamb, which did more fully express, both the nature of his sufferings, and the design of his office: you do not therefore find him expressed in the New Testament by the name of any of those other animals, which were figures of him in the Jewish sacrifices, but only by this of a lamb, as being more significant of the innocence of his person, the meekness of his nature, his sufficiency for his people, than any other.

I. The design of the passover was to set forth Christ. All the sacrifices, which were appointed by God as parts of worship, were designed to keep up the acknowledgment of the fall of man, his demerit by sin, and to support his faith in the promised Redeemer; for they being instituted not before the fall, but probably immediately after the first promise of the Seed of the woman, did all refer to that seed promised, whose heel was to be bruised, as to the foundation of their institution; and being unable of themselves to purge the sin of a rational creature, and the spiritual substance of the soul, they must refer to that which was only able to do it: "Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will," Heb. x. 9,; the will of God manifested in the first draught and agreement in heaven, and

shadowed in all the sacrifices under the law. When sacrifices of themselves were not, nor could be grateful to God, nor the blood of an animal give a due compensation to an offended God for the sin of man, then said Christ, "Lo, I come," as the person represented by those pictures, as the body signified by those shadows. All those institutions, not being designed for any virtue in themselves, but as notices of the intent of God, and the methods he designed for the taking away sin by the promised Seed; that it was to be by blood and death, that this was the agreement between God and the seed so promised; therefore they were, in all those doleful spectacles of blood and slaughter, to look through that veil to the calamities the promised Seed should endure for the taking away sin, and have a prospect of the heinousness of sin, and the sharpness of the sufferings of the Messiah, in the groans and strugglings of those dying creatures. So the design of this passover was ultimately to represent the Messiah to them, by whose blood they were to have a spiritual deliverance from sin and Satan, as, by the blood of the Lamb, they had a deliverance from the sword of the destroying angel, and afterwards from Pharaoh and the Egyptian pressures. He is therefore called the Lamb of God, as being shadowed by the paschal lamb of the old testament. All things under the law were but shadows of things to come, Heb. x. 1. Christ is the real accomplishment of all; he is our mystical, spiritual, heavenly, perfect passover; therefore those words which are immediately spoken of the paschal lamb, and did immediately respect the passover,

"neither shall you break a bone thereof," Exod. xii. 46. and Numb. ix. 12. are said to be fulfilled in Christ the antitype, as if they had been immediately pronounced of him, when they were spoken of the paschal lamb: "For those things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken," John xix. 36. And, indeed, if we consider all the circumstances in the institution, they seem not worthy of the wisdom of God, nor are capable of having any reason rendered for them, if they be not referred to some other mystery: and what can that be, but the Redeemer of the world represented thereby? Why should so much care be in the choice and separation of a lamb? What virtue had the blood of a poor animal to secure the house, and the life of the first-born against the sword of a strong and invisible angel? Was the sprinkling of the blood upon the posts a necessary mark for the angel, as though he had not understanding enough to distinguish between the houses and children of the Israelites and Egyptians? Could not God have signified his pleasure to the angel without such a mark, and given him directions for the security of his people? How can we think God should appoint so many ceremonies in it, lay such a charge upon them for the strict observation of them, if he designed it not as a prop to their faith, a ground to expect a higher and spiritual deliverance by the blood of the Messiah, as well as a trial of their obedience, a memorial of their temporal deliverance, and a sign for the direction of the angel in the execution of his commission

II. The believers in that time regarded it as a

type of the Messiah. "Through faith, he," that is, Moses, "kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them," Heb. xi. 28. It was an illustrious testimony of Moses' faith, to rely upon the promise and good-will of God, and keep the passover, when the blood of a lamb seemed so improbable a means of preserving the Israelites from the destroying angel's sword; yet certainly Moses' faith pierced further, and looked through this shell to the kernel, through this sign to the thing signified by it. Moses could not have esteemed the reproach of Christ, verse 26. had he not known Christ; and we cannot suppose so illustrious a prophet, that had such an estimation of Christ as to value his reproaches, did terminate his faith upon the outward action and the bare type, but pierced further to the promised Seed, as well as Abel in his sacrifice. It is not likely that his faith stuck only in the effusion of the blood of an animal, and did not see the effusion of the blood of the Messiah, whose reproach he had been so willing to bear. It had been too low a faith for so great a man, not to regard the spiritual deliverance promised to be wrought by the bruising the heel of the Seed of the woman. Who can think Moses utterly ignorant of the design of that promise? And if not, who can think his faith should terminate in the outward sign, and that the apostle should give such encomiums to a faith of no higher an elevation, than that which respected the command of God in that present affair? Moses' faith had been great in former commands; why should the apostle skip over them, if he had not designed to show his faith in the Messiah

figured in the passover? The apostle doth not speak of faith in God simply considered in that chapter, but of faith in the Mediator or high Priest, whom he had discoursed of throughout that book. How could the ancient believers eat the same spiritual food, and drink of the same spiritual rock, which was Christ, without faith in him, and respecting him as the object of faith in that rock and manna? 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. Some of the Jews acknowledge, that the Messiah is to come exactly on that day in which the passover was offered, when they fled out of Egypt. And to redeem Israel the 15th day of the month Nisan, which was the day wherein Christ by his death redeemed the world. They came out of Egypt the first month, when the moon was at the full, and in the same month, and the same appearance of the moon, did Christ procure our spiritual liberty by his death.

III. The paschal lamb was the fittest to represent Christ. It was a sacrifice and a feast; a sacrifice in the killing it and sprinkling the blood, a feast in their feeding upon it. It represents Christ as a victim satisfying God, as a feast refreshing us; he was offered to God for the expiation of our sins, he is offered to us for application to our souls. The apostle mentions one in the text, the other in the verse following, "therefore let us keep the feast." A lamb is both clothes and meat: Christ is clothing to us, by righteousness to cover our nakedness; and food to us, by his body and blood to satisfy our appetite: a sacrifice, and a feast, for us.

The truth of this proposition will appear,

1. In the resemblance between the paschal lamb, and the Redeemer.

2. In the effects or consequents of it.

1. In the resemblance between the paschal lamb and the Redeemer.

(1.) A lamb is a meek creature. It hurts none, is hurt by all; it hangs not back, when it is led to the slaughter; it cries not when it is pierced; no greater emblem of patience to be found among irrational creatures. To this the prophet likens our Saviour, when he saith, "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," Isa. liii. 7. How strange was his humility in entering into such a life! how much more stupendous in submitting to such a death, as shameful as his life was miserable! For the Son of God to be counted the vilest of men; the Sovereign of angels, to be made lower than his creatures; the Lord of heaven, to become a worm of the earth; for a Creator to be spurned by his creatures—is an evidence of a meekness not to be paralleled The soldiers that spat upon him, and mocked him, met not with a reproachful expression from him. He held his peace at their clamours, offered his back to their scourges, reviled them not when he lay under the greatest violences of their rage, was patient under his sufferings, while he was despised more than any man by the people. His calmness was more stupendous than their rage, and the angels could not but more inexpressibly wonder at the patience of the sufferer, than the unmercifulness of the executioners; he was more willing to die, than they were to put him to death; he suffered not by force, he courted the effusion of his blood, when he knew that the hour which his Father had appointed, and man needed, was ap-

proaching. Neither the infamy of the cross, nor the sharpness of the punishment, nor the present and foreseen ingratitude of his enemies, could deter him from desiring and effecting man's salvation. He went to it, not only as a duty, but an honour; and was content for a while to be the sport of devils, that he might be the spring of salvation to men. And when he was in the furnace of divine wrath, and deserted by his Father, he utters a sensible, but not a murmuring expostulation; he received our sins upon his shoulders, to confer his divine benefits upon our hearts; he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, he despised the shame, submitted to the cross, his own worldly reputation was of no value with him, so he might be a sacrifice for the redemption of forlorn man: and, in the whole scene, manifested a patience greater than their cruelty. From this paschal lamb typifying the Redeemer, the Jews might have learned not to expect a Messiah wading through the world in blood and slaughter, sheathing his sword in the bodies of his enemies, and flourishing with temporal victories and prosperity; but one, meek, humble, and lowly, suiting the temper of the lamb which represented him in the passover.

(2.) It was to be a lamb without blemish, Exod. xii. 5. It was to be entire in all its parts, sound, without bruise or maim; and the reason why it was separated four days before the killing of it was, that they might have time to understand whether it had any spot or defect in it: so is the Lamb of God; he was holy in the production of his nature, as well as in the actions of his life; though he was of Adam's substance, he was not

contained in Adam's seminal virtue; he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, therefore unblemished in his conception, unspotted in his birth. From the first moment of his conception, he was filled with all supernatural grace, according to the capacity of his humanity; his union with the divine nature, secured him against the sinful infirmities of our nature, and made all supernatural perfections due to him, whereby he might be fitted for all holy operations. As he was that holy thing in his birth, Luke i. 35. so he was righteous to the last moment of his life. The law of God was within his heart, signified by the tables of the law laid up in the ark, a type of his human nature, which possessed in a sovereign degree all the habits of the most accomplished righteousness that ever was in the world; to which Peter alludes, "a lamb without spot and blemish," 1 Peter i. 19. a divine idea of all virtue, who infinitely surpassed all the holiness of men or angels. The apostle multiplies expressions to declare it, and all little enough to express it: "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 26. He was like us in our nature, but not in our blemishes; he had our flesh, but without the least stain of imperfection; he had the likeness of sinful flesh, but there was not any inherency of sin in him, or adherency of it to him, in the assumption of our nature, Heb. iv. 15. as the serpent upon the pole had the likeness, but not the venom of the serpent. He was not subjected to our sin, as he was to our natural infirmities; as he had the form of a servant, without the impurities of our slavery; and, in all the days of his flesh, was not found guilty of one fault to God or man.

It was necessary he should be so. Had he been obnoxious to sin, he had not been able to take away the sins of the world; no impure person could have made our peace with God, because he could not have made his own peace, nor have procured quietness in his own conscience; he could not have merited for himself, much less have wrought any righteousness for others.

(3.) The lamb was to be chosen, and set apart three days, and killed the fourth in the evening, Exod. xii. 6. Or between the two evenings; as it is in the Hebrew. Our Saviour was separate from men, manifested himself in the work of his prophetical office three years and upwards, before he was offered up as a sacrifice in the fourth year, after he had been solemnly inaugurated in the exercise of his office. Their keeping the lamb in custody, and tying it at the feet of their beds, that being in view it might remind them of their servitude in Egypt, and deliverance from thence by the mighty hand of God, noted the humiliation of Christ before his death, which is called his prison, and therefore the beginning of his exaltation is called a taking him from prison and from judgment," Isa. liii. 8. As the lamb was set apart the tenth day, so some observe, that, in answer to the type, Christ did on the tenth day solemnly and in triumph enter into Jerusalem, and by the same gate through which lambs were led to sacrifice; and he was crucified that very day and time wherein the paschal lamb was to be slain, between the two evenings; that is, the declining of the sun from noon, which was the first evening, and the setting of it, which was the second; for it was about the ninth hour, or three

in the afternoon, the usual time wherein they killed the passover, that Christ was offered up as a complete "sacrifice to God," Matt. xxvii. 46, 50. It was ordered by God to be killed in the evening, to signify the sacrifice of the Messiah in the evening of the world. He was crucified at the end of the second age of the world, the age of the law, and the beginning of the third age, that of the gospel, which is called in scripture the last times, Heb. i. 2. and "the ends of the world," 1 Cor. x. 11. which Peter alludes to when he compares him to the paschal "lamb without blemish, manifested in these last times for you," 1 Peter i. 19, 20. The death of Christ was in the first evening of the world. The sun is turned; the world shall not last so long after the coming of Christ, as it did before; the state of the world is far declined, and the consummation of all things is not far off, since more than sixteen hundred years* are past since the first evening began.

(4.) "The lamb was to be roasted with fire whole, not sodden," Exod. xii. 8, 9. To put them in mind of the hardship they endured in the brick-kilns of Egypt, and as a type of the scorching sufferings of the Redeemer, whose "strength was dried up like a potsherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws," Psalm xxii. 15. probably alluding to this roasting of the paschal lamb. He bore the wrath of that God who is a consuming fire, without any water, any mitigation or comfort in his torments. It may note also the gradual rising of the suffering of Christ. As his exaltation was not all at one time, but by degrees, so

* Now eighteen hundred.

were his sufferings, by outward wounds, cutting reproaches, and inward agonies. The pains of the body were inexpressible in regard of the nervousness, and therefore sensibility, of those parts, his hands and feet, which were pierced upon the cross. The consideration of those millions of sins laid upon him, could not but be an inexpressible grief to the pure nature of Christ, had there been nothing of the wrath of God mixed with it. But this bodily death and grief was not all; the wrath of God dreadfully flamed out against his soul; there was the principal seat of the sufferings of Christ, because the soul is the principal seat of that sin for which he suffered. What should have been inflicted upon us, was inflicted upon him: but we had not only merited the death of the body, but a death joined with the curse of God tormenting the soul. He tasted death, the death which the devil had the power of, that "death which men feared," Heb. ii. 9. 14, 15. which is the weight of that eternal death due to sin. How sharp must that be, which had the bitterness of a thousand deaths, for those millions of sins which Christ bore in his body, every one of which had deserved an entire death from the hand of God! How grievous was that death, since he that was more courageous than all the martyrs, sweat drops of blood at the approach of the cross; and when he was upon it, uttered that terrible complaint, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" words which never came out of the mouth of any of the martyrs in the strength of their torments; so that the sufferings of Christ were of that weight, that a mere creature would have sunk under them, not only the holiest man, but the highest angel.

(5.) "Not a bone of the paschal lamb was broken," Exod. xii. 46. Which, according to the opinion of some, signified that kind of death to which the breaking of the bones belonged, and that was crucifixion; it being the custom to break the bones of malefactors, that their punishment might be shortened. This was fulfilled in our Saviour, John xix. 36. Death had not a full power over him, he was not broken to pieces by the greatness of his sufferings, but surmounted his enemies upon the cross, and was reserved entire for a resurrection.

There may be other resemblances noted. As the lamb was to be a male, which implies the perfection and strength of the sacrifice, not above a year old, the sufferings of Christ were in the prime of his age.

2. There is a resemblance in the effects or consequences of the passover.

(1.) The diverting the destroying angel by the sprinkling of the blood upon the posts, to be a mark to the angel, to spare the first-born of such houses, was the main end expressed in the institution, Exod. xii. 12, 13. Their preservation could not be merited by the blood of an animal. It had a higher cause, the blood of Christ, which was represented by it; to which purpose the observation of Chrysostom is remarkable. As the statues of kings, though they are inanimate things, yet are sanctuaries to preserve those that fly to them; not because they are statues, but because they represent the prince: so the blood of the Lamb preserved the families, not because it was blood, but because it represented the blood of the Messiah. This blood quenches that fire

of wrath we had merited, turns away that vengeance which would else consume us. By virtue of this sacrifice, "we pass from death to life," John v. 24. When God shall judge the world, he will pass over those whom he sees sprinkled with the blood of his Well-beloved, and turn from them the edge of that consuming sword, which shall strike through the hearts of those that are without this blood of sprinkling. It is only under the warrant of this blood, that we can be safe. The Redeemer's blood shed for us, and sprinkled on us, preserves our souls to eternal life. As the destroying sword did not touch the Israelites, so condemning wrath shall not strike those tnat are under the protection of it; death shall have no power over them. The blood of the paschal lamb wrought a temporal deliverance, and this blood a spiritual and eternal one.

(2.) Upon this succeeded that liberty God had designed for them, Exod. xii. 31. As it secured them from death, so it was the earnest of their deliverance, and broke the chains of their slavery. The death of Christ is the foundation of the full deliverance of his people, and the earnest of the fruition of the purchased and promised inheritance. This was the conquest of Pharaoh, upon which soon after followed his destruction. Pharaoh's heart was not bent till the celebration of this passover; that which succeeded upon it, laid him more flat than all the former plagues, whereby he had smarted. The promises concerning the Messiah, and the sacrifices which were types of him, terrified the devil, Pharaoh's antitype; but only the blood of Christ shed, conquers him, and pulls captives from his chains. The Israelites'

slavery ended, when their sacrifices were finished; the efficacy of this Divine Passover delivers men from a spiritual captivity, under the yoke of sin, and the irons of Satan, instates them in the liberty of the children of God, whereby they become a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a free and peculiar people. This strikes off the shackles, works an escape from the pressures of spiritual enemies, changes a deplorable captivity into a glorious liberty, and reduces Satan to so impotent a condition, that all his strength, and all his stratagems, cannot render him master of that soul that is once freed from his chains. As after this passover, the Egyptian strength was so scattered, that they were as ready to force that people to their liberty, as before they were desirous to detain them their slaves, and were never able to reduce them to their former chains.

(3.) After this passover they do not only enjoy their liberty, but begin their march to Canaan, the promised and delightful land. They then turn their backs upon Egypt, and their faces towards Canaan; and, after a pilgrimage in the desert, they enter into the land flowing with milk and honey; so, by the merit of the sacrifice of Christ, the true Israelite turns his face from earth to heaven, from a world that lies in wickedness, to an inheritance of the saints in light, and travels towards Canaan, whither he shall be sure to enter after he hath finished his pilgrimage, to feed upon the milk and honey, the glory and happiness proper to that state. Then shall all the ends of this passover be fulfilled and completed "in the kingdom of God," Luke xxii. 16. and the soul remain for ever in a glorious state

beyond the reach of its former tyrants, free from all fear of slavery, for ever rejoicing in the happy accomplishment of the promises of God. In short, as after the celebration of this passover in Egypt, all the promises of God to them began to take place, and pass intoper formance; so by the death of Christ, the true passover, all the promises were made yea and amen, in him, and began to be made good to every believer.

1. Of information. Is Christ called our passover? Then,

(1.) The study of the old testament is advantageous. The apostle here writes to the Corinthians, among whom were not only Hellenites, but Gentiles, who could not understand the nature and ends of the passover, without the knowledge of the old testament; by this they are implicitly directed to the study of it. The old testament verifies the new, and the new illustrates the old. The old shows the promises of God, and the new the performance; what was predicted in the old, is fulfilled in the new. By comparing both together, the wisdom of God in his conduct is cleared, and the truth of God in his word confirmed. The old testament delivers the types, the new interprets them: the old presents them like money in a bag; the new spreads them, and discovers the value of the coin; the Israelites in the old felt the weight of the ceremonies, believers in the new enjoy the riches of them.

(2.) Upon what a slender thread doth the doctrine of transubstantiation hang! Christ is here called the passover; was the paschal lamb therefore substantially the body of Christ? Were those lambs that were slain in Egypt, or at any

other time in the celebration of this ordinance, transubstantiated into Christ? Yet Christ is as absolutely here called the passover, and in other places the lamb, as the bread in the sacrament is called his body, or the wine his blood. Christ is said to be the rock, of which the Israelites drank, 1 Cor. x. 4. Was the rock or the water that flowed from it, transubstantiated into Christ? But in scripture the name proper to the thing represented, is given to that which represents it. The lamb is called the passover, because it is a memorial of the angel's passing over the Israelites' families, and not only called so at the first institution, but above fifteen hundred years after that miraculous mercy. So the bread and wine are called the body and blood of Christ, because they are memorials and signs of his body and blood. If the church of the Jews spake figuratively in the case of the passover, what difficulty is it, that Christ should call the memorials of his body and blood by the name of the things they signified?

(3.) It gives us a probable reason for the change of the sabbath from the seventh day to the first. That it is changed, is evident by apostolical example.* It is probable that from the creation the year began in September, the autumnal equinox, the fruits being on the trees at the creation; but now God orders the beginning of the year from the time of this first passover, and the consequences following upon it, their deliverance from Egypt, which was in March the vernal equinox: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you," Exod. xii. 2. Had the year began from March at

* Lightfoot's Gleanings on Exodus xii. 2.

the beginning, it had not been so proper to command them to begin it from that month, which they had always observed before as the beginning of the year. The Israelites had been as it were buried in Egypt, and this being the month of their resurrection, should be the first month of the year. This change of the beginning of the year, gives us a probable reason of the change of the sabbath. If the beginning of the year were changed upon the account of the type, a day might well be changed upon the account of the antitype. If this in the figure were counted greater than creation, that the month of the world's creation must give place to it, the substance of this figure appearing, might well be the cause of the change of a day, and the seventh day of the creation give place to the first day of the perfection of redemption.

(4.) The ancient Jews were under a covenant of grace. Christ was the end, the spirit, the life of their sacrifices. The passover, rock, sacrifices, manna, were the swaddling-bands wherein he was wrapt. They ate of the same spiritual meat, drank of the same spiritual drink: the rock which followed them, cherished them, and watered them, was Christ, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. Christ to come was set forth to them as an object of faith. Christ was the rock, the passover sacramentally. Their sacraments and ours were the same in effect, though diverse in signs. Hence their sacraments are attributed to us, circumcision and the passover, spiritually; ours in the same manner to them, baptism and the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. x. 2, 3. They indeed had Christ, as it were, in his infancy; we in his ripe and full age. They had him under the obscure veils of lambs, bullocks,

goats; we have him in his person. They had the sun under a cloud, we the sun at noon-day in his glory.

2. Comfort. In the security Christ procures. The destroying angel was not to enter into any sprinkled house; no passage was afforded to him. The wrath of God, or the malice of the devil, can have no power over them that are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. In the efficacy. The blood of the lamb was but a sign of that deliverance of the Israelites, but could not purge their defiled consciences; but the blood of our Lamb hath merited our salvation, can cleanse our consciences from dead and condemning works, to serve the living God, and rejoice in him, who without this sprinkling will be to us a consuming fire. As the passover was killed, that it might be their food as well as their security; so was Christ crucified, that he might be our atonement and our nourishment, our shield and our food, to make us partakers of his benefits by a spiritual application, and a close incorporation of us with himself. This comfort is the greater, by how much the tyrant we are delivered from, is more dreadful than Pharaoh, whose design is not only, like his, to afflict our bodies, but to plunge our souls and bodies into the same hell with himself. It is from the wrath of God, our Passover hath delivered us: and what is the anger of Pharaoh to the fury of an offended Deity, kindled against us by our multiplied transgressions? It is true, deliverance is yet but begun; it is not yet perfect; miseries, and spiritual contests, are to be expected. Pharaoh will pursue, but shall not overtake; the sea shall ruin the Egyptians, but

secure the Israelites; death shall not swallow up those who are sprinkled with this holy blood. Consider also, if God were so punctual to his word in so light an instance as the blood of the lamb, he will be as stedfast to it in so great an instance as the blood of his Son beheld cleaving to the soul.

3. Exhortation.

(1.) Thankfully remember this passover. A redemption from divine wrath, a spiritual life and liberty, the fruits and purchase of this Lamb, are incomparably beyond the temporal deliverance conferred upon the Jews. The giving thanks was a duty annexed to the eating of the paschal lamb, wherein they blessed God for the mercy showed to their fathers in bringing them out of Egypt. How infinitely more precious is the blood of the Son of God than the blood of a silly animal! How highly doth the benefit of the one surmount the immediate fruit of the other! And is it not fit our praises should surpass those of the Jews for the old passover? Remember it with bitterness. The Israelites ate the passover with bitter herbs; shall we be without it, when we consider the cause of our slavery, and the means of our deliverance? A bitterness of soul will make the taste of the benefit of Christ more delicious.

(2.) Inquire whether He be our passover. He is a passover, but is he a lamb eaten by us, owned by us? He is ours by the gift of God, but is he ours by the acceptation of our souls? It is the most useful, most necessary inquiry we can make. All the comfort of possessions in the world consists in the word *mine*, *ours*, and the use as ours; all the comfort of spiritual mercy consists in

property, possession, and fruition. If he be our lamb, we must be like him, we must learn of him. As he is the cause of our expiation, he must be the copy of our imitation, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest unto your souls," Matt. xi. 29. No rest without a sense of sin, and humiliation for it. This Lamb is ours, in the liberty, life, glory, and rest he hath purchased, when we are like him, when we learn of him.

(3.) Have faith in the blood of Christ. The killing the lamb, signified the death of Christ; the sprinkling the blood, signified the application of it by faith. It was not the blood contained in the veins of the lamb, or shed upon the ground, that was the mark of deliverance, but sprinkled upon the posts; nor is it the blood of Christ circulating in his body, or shed upon the cross, which solely delivers us, but as applied by faith to the heart. That was sprinkled upon every house which desired safety, and this upon every soul that desires happiness. Satan will have an undoubted right over all that are without the token of this blood, as the destroying angel had over every house that was not sprinkled with the blood of the passover. This was the sanctuary of the Israelites, the want of it, the death of the Egyptian first-born; from the prince to the peasant; from him that sat upon the throne, to him that was in the dungeon, Exod. xii. 29. Without this blood of sprinkling, neither prince nor beggar can possibly escape; the one's grandeur cannot privilege, nor the other's misery procure pity. The blood was to be taken and put upon the posts; this condition was requisite. To have a part in the great passover of our Lord, the

condition is to sprinkle our hearts by faith with his blood, 1 Peter i. 2. Had an Israelite's family neglected this, it had felt the edge of the angel's sword; the lamb had not availed him, not by a defect of the sacrifice, but by their own negligence or contempt of the condition. Or had they used any other mark, they had not diverted the stroke; no work, no blood, but the blood and sufferings of the Redeemer, can take away the sin of the world; without it, every man in the world lies in the sin of his nature under the wrath of God. If any thing else in the world had a virtue for it, it could not prevail, unless God would accept it, because he did not appoint it. This only is designed to be our passover; where else can we find any remedy against the stings of our consciences, any ease under the weight of our sins, any consolation against divine wrath?

(4.) Let us leave the service of sin. The Israelites after this passover did no more work at the brick-kilns of Egypt; they ceased to be Pharaoh's slaves, and began to be the Lord's freemen. God intended no more to turn them to their former labour; he would have them eat their passover with their loins girt in the habit of travellers. We must be in a readiness to leave the confines of Egypt, all commerce with, and service of sin and Satan, and have our faces set towards Canaan, our steps directed to observe his commands for our rule, to attain his promises for our comfort, and go forward rejoicing in his goodness, celebrating his name, offering our souls and bodies to him, which is a reasonable service to Christ our passover.

Doct. 2. CHRIST IS A SACRIFICE. The word too properly signifies to kill as a sacrifice. Some dispute whether the paschal lamb was a sacrifice, because in a sacrifice something was offered to God either in whole or in part, but the paschal lamb was not offered to God, but eaten by the people; it was killed, to the end that the blood should be sprinkled upon the posts of the doors, and therefore it is rather a sacrament than a sacrifice. Again, the Jews did not sacrifice out of the temple, and therefore in their captivities they did not sacrifice, but both then and now they celebrate the passover. Others again think it a sacrifice, because the sprinkling of the blood upon the posts, was in a manner an offering it to God to turn away his wrath, ("Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven, neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of passover be left until the morning," Exod. xxxiv. 25.) and a means of reconciliation to him, "Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord," Deut. xvi. 2. But whether properly a sacrifice or not, yet it was significant of the propitiating blood of Christ, the future grand sacrifice, by virtue of which we have our deliverance. The apostle might here allude to the passover and other sacrifices, all which did prefigure the spiritual redemption by the Messiah. A sacrifice is defined to be, a religious oblation of something consecrated and dedicated to God by the ministry of a priest according to God's institution, to be offered for a testimony of the worship of God and an external symbol.

I shall lay down some propositions for the illustrating this doctrine.

I. Sacrifices were instituted as types of Christ.

1. They were instituted by God. No satisfactory reason can be rendered of the custom of sacrificing derived from the first age of the world, practised by all nations, till the appearance of the gospel abolished it in those places where it shone. It could not be a dictate of the law of nature inscribed in all men's hearts, for then they would have been of force still. Christianity doth not extinguish any beam of natural light, but adds a clearness to it; it abolishes only what was corrupt, or only ceremonial. Though natural light could not invent them, yet it made them entertainable by all, while they were stung with the conscience of sin, and expectations of vengeance. Men might know that they were unlike to what they were in their creation; they found their light darkened, their beauty defaced, and might suppose that a God of infinite goodness did not send them forth in such a shape out of his mint; this deformity must come upon them for some provocation, and by the means of their own sin. They also found the marks of God's anger upon them, saw and felt his thundering judgments in the world, they had a notion of the vindictive justice of God, they had frequent manifestations of it upon themselves and others. This the apostle affirms generally of the heathens, "They knew the judgment of God, that they which commit such things, are worthy of death;" Rom. i. 32. they had a sentiment of God and revenging justice in their consciences, that it did not become the holiness and righteousness of the divine nature, to let their rebellions remain unpunished. The apostle speaks not there of any supernatural revelation, but the natural manifestation by the

creatures, whereby his justice was discovered, as well as his eternal power and Godhead. Upon this account sacrifices were practised among them, as seeming to them congruous means for the expiation of sin, and to put a stop to the wrath of God, either feared by them, or already kindled among them. For by this action they confessed their desert of death for their crimes, acknowledged God's sovereignty and right over all they had, and owned his mercy in accepting in their stead the life of an irrational animal. For when men are sensible of the anger of God, the next thought in order, is how to escape it. When men see a magistrate suffer murders and violences in a nation to go unpunished, they generally have a horror of it, and expect some judgment of God, till an expiation be made by the death of the offender. And could they reasonably think God to be void of that virtue of justice, which is commendable over all the world by the light of nature, when those perfections of human nature, left in the midst of corruption, are but as little sparks to those which are infinite in God? They were at first instituted by God; though we have not the institution of them in express words, yet we have the practice in Abel, Gen. iv. 4. afterwards in Noah, "Noah offered burnt offerings on the altar," Gen. viii. 20. And since the apostle speaks of "Abel's offering a sacrifice in faith," Heb. xi. 4. it must be God's command; for no act of worship of a human invention can please God. The demand might be made, Who hath required those things at your hands? It had not been formally good, unless offered in faith; nor had it been a fit

ground or medium of faith, without a divine stamp upon it. If the foundation were not divine, the act could not be acceptable.

2. No other reason can be rendered of the institution of them, but as typical of the great sacrifice of the Redeemer. The scripture gives us the only account of this; all nations in the world without the scripture are in the dark, as to the design of those sacrifices, though they practised them conformably to the sentiments of their consciences. The institution of them from the beginning of the world cannot reasonably be concluded to be for any other end, than to prefigure some sufficient sacrifice, able to appease the wrath of God, and pacify the consciences of men, and to instruct men in what was to be brought upon the stage in time, in the exhibition of the person of the Redeemer. In the state of innocence we find no mention of them, nor could they have had any place, had man continued in his created rectitude and integrity. The covenant of works, which then was the rule and ground of man's standing, required not faith in a Redeemer, and therefore implied no such act as sacrificing. Man then had no relation to God but as a creature; and, persisting in obedience, could not by the righteous law of God be subject to death, and therefore no other subjected to death for him; for to have any one to die for us, implies that we had merited death ourselves. It cannot enter into the reason of man to imagine what use they could be for in that state. Death was not due to the righteousness of man's nature, but to his corruption. Adam stood upon his own foundation, and was the foundation of all his posterity, and no

person was substituted in his room. What could sacrifices then represent? Whereof could they be typical? Could they be for the confession of sin? There was none to confess. Could they be to represent a death deserved? There was no crime committed whereby to merit it? Could it be to typify Christ to come? there was no revelation of him till after the fall, Gen. iii. 15. And supposing, as some do, that Christ should have been incarnate, had man persisted in his first integrity; yet none suppose Christ should have been crucified in that nature, without the entrance of sin. What end could be supposed of shedding his blood? For satisfaction of justice? Justice was not provoked. For example? Man perfect in all virtue needed none; besides, he was not capable of the exercise of suffering virtues, who was not capable of suffering in that state. They were appointed therefore after the fall, as representations of this sacrifice, so necessary for the expiation of sin. And some conclude, with probability, that they were put in practice immediately after the making the promise of the seed of the woman, though there be no express scripture for it, from Gen. iii. 21. "God made them coats of skins:" which probably were the skins of slain beasts, very likely consumed by fire from heaven; as the Jews say Abel's sacrifice was, which was a token of God's acceptation of it. This was probably done for the confirmation of the truth of the promise, the clearer representing the design of it to them, by substituting another in the room of the offender, and comforting them thereby, since "without shedding of blood is no remission," Heb. ix. 22. And of those sacrifices the skins

were appointed to be the garments of the first man and woman, to put them in mind of their apostasy, and the way of their recovery, and the righteousness of another, wherein they were to stand before God. But howsoever it be, we cannot suppose Abel to be the first that offered sacrifice, and that one hundred and twenty-nine years should run without the offering of any. It is likely Abel was slain in that year, because Seth was born in the one hundred and thirtieth year of Adam's age, Gen. v. 3. Indeed sacrifices, as they looked backward, could be no other than a transcript of the agreement between the Father and the Son, of the one's paying, and the other's accepting the price of blood for the redemption of man: and as they looked forward, a type of the real performance of the sufferings on the one part and the acceptance of them on the other part, when the fulness of time should come, wherein they were actually to be undergone. This tradition of sacrifices was handed down to all nations of the world, but the knowledge of the end of them was lost. Yet in an exercise of reason they might rise to a consideration, that this low blood could not be a compensation for sin, as not being proportioned to the dignity of him with whom they had to do. But as to the true end of them, the representation of a higher sacrifice, they were not able to discern it by all the reason in the world, after they had lost the revelation of it. By the way: this adds a credit to the scripture, since it gives us an account of the reason of that which was practised by all nations, which they could not without revelation render any tolerable reason for. The scripture makes it plain. God would have a

representation of that which the Redeemer was to offer in the fulness of time for the abolition of sin. As men always need a satisfaction of the justice of God, so God would have it, that in all their worship there should be a mark of this necessity, and some presage that one day there should be a sacrifice eternally efficacious, the reality of which was represented by this figure.

3. Christ did really answer to these types. They were all Christ in a cloud, the substance did answer to the shadows, and he was used in such a manner as the figures of him were. Christ was a victim put in the place of the sinner, to appease the anger of God; and as sins were laid upon the head of the sacrifice, so God put "upon him the iniquities of us all," Isa. liii. 6. In regard of this typicalness of the legal administration, Christ is often called a lamb, and the "Lamb of God," John i. 29. and a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, not only in the decree, but in the type of him, the first sacrifice mentioned in the scripture, which was a firstling of the flock, Gen. iv. 2. 4. Abel being a keeper of sheep. To those figures of him he seems to refer in his last speech upon his cross, John xix. 30. "It is finished." The whole design of the daily and extraordinary sacrifices was completed, the demerit of sin and severity of divine justice were manifested, and the truth of God, as well as his love, made glorious therein; upon which followed the rending of the veil, and the setting heaven open for the entrance of all that believed in him, to approach to God upon the account of this sacrifice.

II. The sacrifices thus instituted, were of them-

selves insufficient, and could not expiate sin; they must therefore receive their accomplishment in some other. Being but shadows by their institution, they could make nothing perfect, (Heb. x. 1. 11. where, and in the following verses, the apostle lays the glory of the legal sacrifices in the dust,) nor really atone, though they typically did: they did but evidence the guilt of sin and misery of men, whence the law is called a minister of death.

1. It was not consistent with the honour of God to be contented with the blood of a beast for an expiation of sin. How could there be in it a discovery of the severity of his justice, the purity of his holiness, or the grandeurs of his grace? How would he have been known in his infinite hatred of sin, if he had accepted the blood of an abject animal as an atonement for the sin of a spiritual soul. Was it becoming the majesty of God, who had denounced a curse in the law upon the transgressors of it, and published it with so terrible a solemnity as thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, which made it pass under the title of a "fiery law," Deut. xxxiii. 2. in regard of the severe menaces against the transgressor, to make so light of it, to accept of the mangling a few beasts, in the place of the offender against it? Should he appear on Mount Sinai with ten thousand of his angels in the giving of it, to let all the threatenings of it vanish into smoke? Was it likely all those curses should be poured out upon a few irrational and innocent creatures, who had never broken that law? Can it be imagined, that after so terrible a proclamation, he should acquiesce in

so light a compensation, as the death of a poor beast? No man can reasonably have such despicable thoughts of the majesty, justice, and holiness of God, or the vileness of sin and greatness of its provocation, as to imagine that the one could be contented, or the other expiated, by the blood of a lamb or bullock. Our own consciences will tell us, that if God will have a sacrifice, it must be proportioned to the majesty of him whom we have offended, and the greatness of the crime we have committed.

2. They have no proportion to the sin of man. The sin of a rational creature is too foul to be expiated by the blood of an irrational creature; nor could the blood of a human body, though the first-born, the strength and delight of man, Micah vi. 7. much less of a beast, bear any proportion to the sin of the soul: "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin," Heb. x. 4. The butchery of so poor a creature, cannot be any compensation for that which is a disparagement of the Creator of the world. What alliance was there between the nature of a beast, and that of a man? An inferior nature can never atone for the sin of a nature superior to it. There is indeed in the groans of those dying creatures some demonstration of God's wrath, but no bringing in an everlasting righteousness, nor any vindication of the honour of the law.

3. The reiteration of them shows their insufficiency. Had the wrath of God been appeased by them, why should the fire burn perpetually upon the altar? Why should it be fed perpetually with the carcases of beasts? As often as

they were offered, a conscience of sin was excited in the presenter of them, iniquity was called to remembrance, Heb. x. 2, 3. The whole scene of that administration loudly published, that the wrath against sin was not appeased, the guilt of the soul not wiped off. If a man had presented a sacrifice for his sin one day, and fallen into the same, or another, before night, he must have repeated his sacrifice for a new expiation; had there been ability in them to perform so great a thing, there had not been a repetition. They were rather a commemoration of sin, and confession of it, than expiations of any; rather accusers, than atoners.

4. God had often spoken slightly of them. He resembles them to the cutting off a dog's neck, when done with an unholy heart, Isaiah lxvi. 3. While the temple stood, he struck their fingers off from hanging upon them, Isa. i. 11—13. indeed he would not reprove them for their offerings, Psa. l. 8. but he would not have them place their justification in them. He professeth he had no delight in them, Psa. xl. 6. If all sacrifices of the law were not of such value, as love to him, and fear of him, they could not expiate; and if that which was more excellent than those, were too weak to effect it, an utter inability must remain in the other. He doth frequently predict the abolition of them, and hath destroyed the temple to which he had affixed them, which remains in desolation without a sacrifice to this day. Besides, he never provided a typical remedy for all sins in them; some transgressors were to be cut off without a sacrifice for them, according to the judicial law, the rule of the government of that people;

upon which account David argues, that God did not delight in them: "Thou desirest not sacrifice, thou delightest not in burnt-offerings," Psa. li. 16. because he had provided no sacrifices for those sins David at that time was guilty of; whereupon he desires, verse 18. that God would do good to Sion in his good pleasure; bring forth that Redeemer out of Sion which he had promised, whose sacrifice being a sacrifice of righteousness, should be infinitely delightful to him. Since therefore it is unbecoming the majesty of God to be satisfied with the blood of a calf or goat, since it bears no proportion to the sin of man, since he never intended those institutions to be perpetual, since the threatenings of the law must, if God be a God of truth, have their accomplishment either in the person offending, or in some undertaker for him, capable of bearing them in his stead; there must be some other sacrifice suited to the majesty of God, able to make an expiation proportionable to the sin of man, a sacrifice able to remove the guilt, and pacify the conscience; a rest for God, and a security for the creature. The natural order of things requires, and the whole design of those legal institutions declares, that as he that keeps the law, should have a reward from the goodness of God; so he that breaks it, should endure a punishment from the justice of God; and every man being a breaker of the law, must either sink under the menaces of it, or present a sufficient sacrifice to God to avert his wrath, a precious blood that may quench the flames of his anger, that God may say to the sinner, I have found, and accepted a ransom for thee. And what is said of this, may be said of all our duties

and performances, the staves upon which men naturally lean for acceptation of their persons. They can no more be acceptable in themselves to God, or remedies for man, than the legal sacrifices, which had no merit in themselves, but represented that which was grateful to God, and meritorious for the creature; and whatsoever virtue and efficacy they had, was not of themselves, but from that which they shadowed.

III. Such a sacrifice therefore is necessary for a sinful creature. No creature can be such a sacrifice; as the apostle argues, "If righteousness be by the law, then was Christ dead in vain," Gal. ii. 21. Upon the same account, it may be concluded, if expiation could be made by a creature for himself, in vain did God send his Son to be a propitiation for sin. Had man himself been sufficient for it, God's sending his Son had rather appeared an act of cruelty to Christ, than of mercy to us. Who could think God should expose the delight of his soul to our infirmities, and a shameful death, if a sufficient sacrifice could have been found elsewhere? Besides, the wrath of God being so terrible, that the human nature of Christ trembled at it, how is any creature ever able to bear the horror of it, and stand as a sacrifice under the weighty strokes of that justice?

1. What is a sacrifice for sin, must be pure and sinless. God will not accept a defiled offering. He that provokes him by his own offence, is not capable of appeasing him for his own or other's. The least blemish in a typical lamb rendered it unfit for the altar. God is infinitely pure, who is offended; the law is exactly holy, which is contemned; a compensation cannot be made to a

holy God, and a righteous law, by the criminal, without enduring an infinite penalty, which, since it cannot be infinite, it must be perpetual. As he would be always suffering, so he would be always sinning, and wrath can never be appeased by that which provokes it, at the same time it endeavours to pacify it. What is sinful can never be capable of pleasing an infinite holiness. If a man had but one sin, and thought to expiate that by any thing he could do, he would still need another sacrifice to expiate the sin of the former, and so would be always satisfying and always sinning, since there is "no man that doth good and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20.) in the doing of it: he could not possibly find any thing in himself, or in any corrupted creature, where he might rest his foot with any content and security. Where any sin is, though but one, there can be no merit. Whatsoever is done after all our strength is gone, is done by the grace of God; in that case God deserves service of us, but we deserve no acceptation from him. Since therefore we are not able, since our fall, of doing one good work, we are not able to offer one acceptable sacrifice; how can man then satisfy for himself, any more than a man that owes a shilling, pays that, by borrowing two; whereby he is so far from paying his debt, that he increaseth it?

2. An infinite sacrifice is necessary for a sin in some respects infinite; for every sin intrencheth upon the honour of an infinite God. An infinite sacrifice is due for an infinite offence. God is infinite in his glory, which is impaired; infinite in his sovereignty, which is degraded; the sacrifice must be of as great a dignity as the offence was

of malignity. It must be fully proportioned to the sin of man, and the majesty of God. What man, nay, what creature is capable of such a proportion? The condition of his nature is too low, and the limits of his dignity too strait, to correspond with such an effect. "The drop of a bucket, and the dust of the balance," are of too vile a nature to be a satisfactory sacrifice to God: all men are no more, Isa. xl. 15—17. nay, "worse than nothing, and vanity;" and therefore all men in the world put together would be so far from redeeming themselves by a sufficient sacrifice, that as themselves, so their sacrifice, would be worse than nothing and vanity, and would be overwhelmed under the punishment due to their offence. Finite bears no proportion to infinite, therefore a finite sacrifice carries no equivalent compensation in it for an infinite wrong. So that neither length of time, nor strength of nature, can ever make a recompense for that offence, which increaseth in proportion, according to the dignity of the person against whom it is committed. If every hair of our head were a soul, and every soul a sacrifice, all would be too poor an amends for that glorious God wronged by us, though it had been but by one act of rebellion; for man cannot do any act of that value in the nature of satisfaction, as one act of sin is injurious in the nature of wrong. Upon the same account of finiteness, no angel could be a proportionable sacrifice to the justice of God, for the sin of man. For though the excellency of the angelical far transcends the nature of man, yet it cannot equal the dignity of God. They are creatures, and an inconceivable

distance is perpetually between creatures and the Creator. Therefore saith Job, "He put no trust in his servants, and his angels he chargeth with folly," Job iv. 18. All the excellency of the angelical nature is despicable, compared with God: and if God did not secure them, they would fall; if God did not preserve light in them, they would be darkness as well as we. If they could not, because they are creatures, man could not, because he was a sinful creature. "Thousands of rivers of oil, and thousands of rams," would have borne far less proportion to the Creator of them, or to sins against him, Micah vi. 6, 7.

3. Necessary, in regard of the justice of God: which is an immutable and infinite perfection of the divine essence. As God is so infinitely holy as it is impossible he should not but hate the least sin, so he is infinite in his justice, and cannot let any sin go unpunished; since he hath declared by his law, that "cursed is he that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them," Gal. iii. 10. and that it was irrevocably past, that "in the day man ate" of the forbidden fruit, he should "die the death," Gen. ii. 17. As the perfection of his nature requires, that he should have for sin an implacable aversion; so the same perfection requires, that justice be not appeased without punishment. Since God therefore would have a sacrifice for sin, to have one disproportioned to his infinite dignity and justice, had been the same as to have none at all. An infinite sacrifice cannot be offered, but by an infinite person: it is necessary therefore that one of the persons of the Trinity should be this sacrifice; and it was

most congruous to the wisdom of God, upon several accounts, that it should be the second. This sacrifice is necessary at least in point of becomingness, as God is the author of all things, and placed them in a rectitude from which they departed by their own folly, and sullied that glory they were created to manifest; it became him to bring things into order again by such a method, as should manifest his hatred of that disorder sin had introduced into the world, and how strict a guardian he would be of the eternal order of things, and of those sacred laws whereby he governs the world: "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering," Heb. ii. 10. As God had made all things for his glory, so it was fit that his Son, becoming the head of the world, should be put in such a posture, as to show forth the glory of God in the most illustrious manner. Now in the sufferings of Christ, the justice of God flames more bright than it could in any creature, and shows itself inflexible against sin; the treasures of his grace are wider opened, than could be in any other act; and his wisdom sparkles more gloriously in bringing men to glory by punishment: and since he made all things, and that for himself, it became him, after the apostasy of man, and the defacing the creation, to restore things in such a way as might conduce most to his own glory, and the happiness of the creature.

IV. Christ only was fit to be this sacrifice. Whatsoever any creature could have done, had been a debt of duty, and that could not have made a compensation for a debt of rebellion; whatsoever

a mere creature could do, was by the gift of God, and therefore could not merit any thing at the hand of God; whatsoever is meritorious, must be our own, as well as that which is not due. Besides, from any other hand God would have received less than the offence merited; at the best it would have been but a feigned and partial satisfaction, which had not been congruous to the wisdom and justice of God, since he determined it necessary to have a sacrifice. But Christ in his divine nature "was equal with God," Phil. ii. 6. and therefore in his person was answerable to the dignity of the person offended; and as he was in the form of a servant, and innocent, he offered that which was not due from himself, and upon his own account, to God; for though as a creature he was bound to the obedience of the precepts of the law, yet as an innocent creature he was not obliged to the penalties of the law, suffering was in no wise due upon his own account. And he was without blemish; had he been a criminal, he could not have been a remedy. He had also an alliance with both parties, he could treat with God, as partaking of his glory, and be a sacrifice for man, as partaking of the infirmities of his nature; he had a body to bear the stroke due to a victim, and a divine nature to sustain him under it; he had a human nature to offer as a sacrifice, and a divine nature to render it valuable and infinitely meritorious; being God and man, he wanted not a fitness to accomplish so great an undertaking. If he had not been man, he could not have been a sacrifice; and if he had not been God, he could not have been a remedy.

It was necessary, in regard of his office of

priesthood, that he should be a sacrifice. He was constituted as a priest for ever by an oath, Psalm cx. 4. Now he could not be a priest without a sacrifice; a priest and a sacrifice are relatives, Heb. v. 1. "Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. It is therefore of necessity, that this man have something to offer," Heb. viii. 3. As he was a prophet, he was to have a doctrine to teach; as a king, he was to have subjects to govern; as a priest, he was to have a sacrifice to offer: as he was a prophet, he was to deliver something from God to men; as he was a priest, he was to present something for man to God: as a prophet, he was to teach men obedience to God; as a priest, he was to make God propitious to men: that which he was to offer must be expiatory, that is the proper notion of a sacrifice; the other offerings are termed gifts. If he had offered the blood of bulls and goats, we had been in the same case we were in before; the insufficiency of them had not been removed by the dignity of the offerer; they could never in their own nature be proportioned to the dignity of the wronged Sovereign, or be adequate to the punishment the criminal had deserved. The impossibility of their taking away sin is positively asserted, Heb. x. 4. The transcendent excellency of the priest could never alter the disproportion between the justice of God provoked by sin, and the death of the miserable beast for it; though the person offering had been greater, the thing offered had been the same; besides, the offending nature had not suffered, but a nature inferior to it. They must have been always offered,

the repetition of them must have been continued; and had that been a proper employment for the Son of God, to have been always imbruing his hands in the blood of animals? But a sacrifice must be offered by him, (if he did not offer one, he was no priest,) and none but himself was a sacrifice worthy to be offered by so great a priest. He offered but once, and it was himself he offered, Heb. vii. 27. And this was so spotless, Heb. ix.14. and of such a "sweet-smelling savour," Eph. v. 2. that it need not again be repeated, Heb. ix. 28. His unblemished soul was made an "offering for sin," Isa. liii. 10. For, being a priest of another kind than the legal priests, he must have a sacrifice of another kind.

VI. Jesus Christ was then a sacrifice in his human nature. To this end a body was prepared for him, to be substituted in the place of those sacrifices wherein God had no pleasure: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me," Heb. x. 5. Cited out of Psalm xl. 6. "Mine ears hast thou opened," as some think figuratively, the ear being taken for the whole body, because obedience is learned by the ear, the instrument of hearing the will of another. The will of God was, that he should be an offering in this body: "By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Christ once for all," Heb. x. 10. And his soul was an "offering for sin," Isa. liii. 10. The first promise evidenced, that though the seed of the woman should tear up the empire of the devil, which by the law he had over sinners, yet it should be by the suffering something from him, by having his heel bruised. There was an obe-

dience to the law to be performed, without which he had not been capable of being a sacrifice; the penalty of the law to be endured, without which he could not be an actual sacrifice. Neither of those could be but in the human nature: obedience to the law is not consistent with the sovereignty of God; according to his divine nature he was under no law: suffering was impossible to the Deity, it is the property of God to be immutable and impassible. His human nature therefore was the sacrifice; for as he was made of a woman, whereby he took our nature, as he was made under the law, whereby he subjected himself to our obedience, he "redeemed us from under the law," from our condemnation, Gal. iv. 5. He that was to break the serpent's head, that is, to dissolve the power, which, as an executioner, he had from an offended God, was to be the seed of the woman. And this he effected by his death and bloody sacrifice, appeasing the wrath of God, and thereby destroying the power of the jailor, which he obtained by the entrance of sin and the curse of the law: "Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. ii. 14. This sacrifice was both of soul and body, as the threatening was, "In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die the death;" that is, be subject to the death and condemnation both of soul and body. As the reward of goodness respects the entire man composed of soul and body, so doth the punishment of sin, which hath corrupted one as well as the other. The sacrifice, therefore, to be offered for the appeasing that wrath, and removing that curse, was to consist both of soul and body.

VII. That whereby this sacrifice was sanctified, was the divine nature. Every sacrifice was sanctified by the altar, Matt. xxiii. 19 There must be something to add an infinite value to the sufferings of his humanity, which could be nothing but the divine nature, and union with it. Nothing but that which is infinite, can confer an infinite value on that which is finite. The infiniteness of dignity resides in the divine nature and essence, and the infiniteness of dignity is as incommunicable as the infiniteness of essence. For it hath its root and foundation in the infiniteness of being, and the one is but the reflection of the other. It is impossible to add a dignity without limits, but one must attribute an essence without bounds, as it is impossible that any thing can possess the lustre and enlivening virtue of the sun, but the sun itself. The human nature suffered, and the divine nature sanctified the humanity, and by reason of this admirable union, and the reflection of the divinity upon the humanity, what was done to the human nature upon the cross, is ascribed to the whole person. They "crucified the Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8. And God purchased the church "with his own blood," Acts xx. 28. It was this made his sufferings acceptable to God, whose justice was to be satisfied; and efficacious for man, whose happiness and commerce with God were to be restored, and his indigences to be supplied Thus some interpret Heb. ix. 14. "Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself to God," understanding by eternal Spirit his Deity; not that he suffered in his divine nature, but by virtue of that presented himself to his Father a most acceptable sacrifice.

So that he had a human nature to serve for a sacrifice, and an eternal spirit, or divine nature, wherein he subsisted, from whence that sacrifice derived an infinite dignity; as gold which hath a lustre of itself, hath a greater when the sun shines full upon it. We may see here how Christ was a priest, sacrifice, altar, in several respects; a priest in his person, a sacrifice in his humanity, the altar in his divinity. He was the offerer and the sacrifice; both are expressed, "He offered up himself," Eph. v. 2. Active as a priest, passive as a victim: as one, offering; as the other, offered. Upon this account of his blood being offered by his person, he is called God in the act of oblation of his blood for the redemption of the church, "which he," referring to God, "hath purchased with his blood," Acts xx. 28. The Jews and soldiers were not the priests, as some affirm. They were the instruments of slaying him, but not with the intention of a sacrifice. They were instruments in it, but could not force him to it. His death was intended by them; his death was a sacrifice intended by himself; his laying down his life was of himself, John x. 18. which is not meant barely of his death, but of his death as respecting his sheep, verse 15. and indeed, unless it had been voluntary, it had not been savoury.

VIII. Upon the sacrifice of Christ, all his other sacerdotal acts depend, and from thence they receive their validity for us. It is fit therefore we should well understand and often consider this sacrifice, which is the foundation of all our peace and comfort in reference to God. This was the chief thing God eyed in the first declaration of him, Gen. iii. 15. in the serpent's bruising his

heel; nothing but this spoken of. His resurrection was first represented in the safety of Isaac after he was designed to death, and other things not till after that successively; God making the light to dawn upon them by degrees.

1. This was the ground of his ascension and entrance into heaven as a Priest. The high priest was not to enter within the vail without blood: what was in the type, was to be answered in the antitype. An expiatory sacrifice was necessary to precede his ascension to heaven; the sacrifice must be offered upon the earth, as the legal sacrifices were without; heaven was no place for slaughter, and with this blood he was to enter: heaven's gates had been shut against him without it. Death was the penalty threatened, if the legal high-priest ventured to step into the holy of holies without blood. The apostle argues from this, "into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people," Heb. ix. 7, 25. According to this type, Christ by his own blood entered once into the holy place; how and in what order? after he had obtained redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12. which is ascribed to his death, verse 15. His entrance into heaven, and what he doth for us there, is laid upon the account of his death as a sacrifice upon the earth; by virtue of which he went to heaven to present it to God, and apply it to us. And besides, all his royalty and power, whereby we have security and protection from him, depends upon this; for it is because of that obedience to blood and death which he rendered to God, that he hath given him a name above every name, and advanced

him to a sovereign power: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," Phil. ii. 8, 9. "wherefore," referring to his death, verse 8.

2. This is the foundation of his intercession. There are two functions of Christ's priesthood, oblation and intercession; they are both joined together, but one as precedent to the other. The legal high priest, when he had first cut the throat of the sacrifice without, upon the day of the anniversary sacrifice, was not esteemed by that act to have completed his propitiation till he had entered into the sanctuary, and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice with his finger; so the propitiation made by our Redeemer, was not fully complete, till he entered into heaven to exercise his intercession. Yet the oblation precedes the intercession, and the intercession could not be without the oblation. It was with the blood of the victim, and no other blood, he was to enter. Without the oblation he would have had nothing to present in his intercession. They are placed in this order by the apostle, 1 John ii. 1, 2. He is first a sacrifice for propitiation, then an advocate for intercession. What he doth as an advocate, is grounded upon what he did as a sacrifice; and were it not so, the apostle's arguing would not be valid, who placeth our salvation by the life of Christ, upon our reconciliation by the death of Christ, Rom. v. 10. Indeed, he could not have been admitted according to the type, as an advocate, but as being the high priest, and a high priest he could not have been without a sacrifice.

3. This is the foundation of all the grace any have. The conveyance of all the gracious love

of God is through this channel. In redemption by his blood, the riches of the grace of God abounded, and that with the marks of the highest wisdom, Eph. i. 7, 8. All had lain buried from the view of man, and the fruition of men, without this sacrifice. This did commend his love, as well as satisfy his justice. His wrath had not been appeased, nor his grace drawn out to us, without it; nor could the Redeemer lay any claim to any grace and mercy, for those for whom he came, unless he had suffered for them, as well as taken flesh for them. His "offering himself," Isaiah iiii. 10—12. precedes his having a seed. The being and beauty of his seed depend upon the efficacy of his meritorious sacrifice. The offering his soul goes before the pardon of our sin; the payment of the ransom, before the sprinkling it on us; the sealing the covenant, before the making good the covenant; his sufferings, before his triumph; and the streams of his blood, before the treasures of his grace. Upon the account of this sacrifice we enjoy the presence of God, protection against the enemies of our salvation, and receive the blessings necessary for our souls. By all this it appears, that Christ is a sacrifice. This was his intent in coming. His death as a sacrifice was his intention in the assumption of our flesh; the prophecies predicted it, the types represented it; this he pursued, for this he thirsted. The accomplishment of this fiery baptism was the matter of his longing, his thoughts were never off from it, his will shrunk not from it: when his human will shewed some reluctance, he quickly returned to its fixedness; nothing could deter him, nothing could divert him. When

he undertook to be mediator, he undertook to be a sacrifice, as a thing necessarily annexed to that office for the honour of God's justice, and the preservation of the rights of his sacred law. Upon which account, when the apostle speaks of this Mediator, he adds with the same breath, "who gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. After the title of Mediator follows the "blood of sprinkling," Heb. xii. 24. A Mediator he was by means of "his death," Heb. ix. 15. It is with good reason, therefore, that in our creed there is so quick a passage from the nativity of Christ to his passion, without any mention of the acts of his life, because he was incarnate that he might be crucified.

The essence of a sacrifice consisted,

(1.) In the slaying or destroying it. (2.) In the offering it to God. Both were done in Christ.

(1.) In the slaying or destroying it. The shedding of the blood, the seat of the spirits, which are the instruments of action, was necessary to an expiatory sacrifice. The scape-goat indeed is called a sacrifice, Lev. xvi. 5. which was not slain in the temple, nor burnt, but sent into the wilderness; and, as the Jews tell us, destroyed by being thrown down a rock, to which purpose men were appointed: who were to give notice of it by some signals from hill to hill, at a convenient distance; before which notice, the congregation at Jerusalem did not dissolve. But the other expiatory sacrifices were devoured by fire; fire being the highest representation in the world, of the justice of God. The sufferings of Christ extended to soul and body. He was scorched by the "wrath of God," Psa. xxii. His soul was

poured out to death, Isa. liii. 12. alluding to the blood of the sacrifices poured out; and his human nature dissolved by the separation of the soul and body.

(2.) In the offering it to God. Oblation to God was a main part of a sacrifice, so "Christ offered himself to God," Eph. v. 2. To God as essentially considered, whereby the whole right of government and dominion was acknowledged belonging to God. Had the death of Christ been only for example, it had not been offered to God, who was not capable of any example to be set him. It being therefore offered to him, manifests it to be a sacrifice.

Doct. 3. CHRIST WAS SACRIFICED FOR US. The original word, when joined with suffering for another, always signifies in another's stead and place; it is so used, "For a good man some would even dare to die," Rom. v. 7. that is, instead of a good man, to free him from the death he was designed to, not only for his sake; so, "He was made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. that is, in our stead, suffering the curse due to us for our sins. He is called the Lamb of God, in regard of God's designation of him; our lamb, our passover, in regard of his substitution in our place: as he died to appease the wrath of God, his death referred to the justice of God; as that justice flamed out against us, his death referred to us; he was a screen between the heat of wrath, and the sufferings of the creature: a Mediator respecting God, for his satisfaction and glory; respecting us, for our reparation and grace.

This will be cleared if we consider,

I. That Christ could not be a sacrifice for himself. The Messiah was to be cut off, but not for himself, Dan. ix. 26: he needed no sacrifice for himself as the other high priests did; they were sinners, he was harmless; they being encompassed with infirmities, needed, or ought to offer sacrifices for themselves, Heb. v. 2, 3. He was "a Lamb without blemish, who knew no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth," 1 Peter i. 19. nor did he ever do any thing displeasing to his Father, John viii. 29. He needed no glory to be purchased for him, for he was from eternity happy in the same essence with the Father, being "God blessed for ever over all," Rom. ix. 5. having the command over all, and wanting nothing to a perfect blessedness. The sacrifices which were types of him, could not be for themselves; they were not capable of sinning, as wanting a rational nature, and therefore a sinful nature. A beast was not capable of sin, because not capable of a law, and therefore its blood was not due for any sin of its own. Christ had no sin, none actual, "no guile was found in his mouth," 1 Peter ii. 22; nor original, that was stopped by his extraordinary conception by the Holy Ghost, which rendered him immaculate.

II. Sacrifices implied this. They had a relation to the offerer, and were substituted in his place. The substitution of the sacrifice in the place of the offenders, was always supposed by the heathen; hence did the offering of human victims arise, their opinion being, that they could not present to God a nobler creature in their stead, than one of their own nature. The notion of all sacrifices was, that they were in the place of a sinner,

to appease the offending deity, and exempt the guilty person from punishment. And the actions about the Jewish sacrifices manifested this; the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the beast, signifying by that ceremony its consecration to God, and owning the translation of his guilt upon that creature, and putting it "in his place, to undergo the punishment deserved by his sin," Lev. iv. 24. 29. And in this action of laying on hands, both hands, and with all their strength, as the Jews tell us, confession of sin was made by the presenter of the sacrifice, which signified also the disburdening of his guilt upon the head of the victim. By those actions was manifested a transferring of sin from the offender to the sacrifice, and of the death due to the criminal in like manner. Besides, the pouring out of the blood, wherein the soul of the beast was supposed to be, was destined for the expiation of the sin of the soul of the offerer, Lev. xvii. 11, 14: not that the blood is properly the soul, but because the vital spirits, which are the instruments of action, and conveying the virtue of the soul to particular members, are seated in the blood.

III. The whole economy of Christ is expressed in the whole scripture to have a relation to us. All things preparatory to his sufferings were for us: some were first given to him, before "he was given for them," John xvii. 9; he took flesh for us, "unto us a child is born," Isa. ix. 6.; for he has a fulness of grace in his human nature, John i. 16; for our sakes he dedicated himself, that we might be sanctified, John xvii. 19; for us he gave himself, Gal. ii. 20; in the very moment of his sufferings, our iniquities were laid upon him, that

health by his stripes might be derived to us. Christ was a common person for us, as the "scape-goat was common to the whole congregation," Lev. xvi. 21. representing all of them; Christ was a common person for us, as Adam was, to whom, in this respect, he is compared: "Who is," that is, Adam, "the figure of him that was to come," Rom. v. 14. The apostle compares one Adam and one Christ; he illustrates the condition and the actions of the one, by the condition and actions of the other; what happened to us by Adam, and what happened to us by Christ. This typicalness of Adam cannot be in any other regard than as he was a common person, representing all that were in his loins by natural generation. In this regard Christ is called the second man: "The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. xv. 47. Not that he was the second man born in the world, for many ages were run before his incarnation, but the second common root in the world. As when Adam, being the first root of mankind in a natural way, fell, the curse came upon him and all his posterity, and the standing punishments pronounced against him did reach, and were meant of all his posterity, Gen. iii. 19; not only of Adam personal, but of Adam as a representative, and so of all those who were not yet born into the world. As we sinned in Adam as a common root of natural generation, so we were all sacrificed in Christ as a common head of all that are in him by a spiritual union: the one merited death and damnation for all that descend from him; the other life and salvation for all that believe in him.

IV. Our sins were imputed to him as to a sacrifice. Christ the just is put in the place of the unjust, to suffer for them, 1 Peter iii. 18. Christ is said to bear sin, as a sacrifice bears sin, Isaiah liii. 10. 12. His soul was made an offering for it. But sin was so laid upon the victims, as that it was imputed to them in a judicial account, according to the ceremonial law, and typically expiated by them. Christ had not taken away our sins as mediator, had he not borne the punishment of them; as a surety, "He was made sin for us," 2 Cor. v. 21. and he bare our sins, which is evident by the kind of death he suffered, not only sharp and shameful, but accursed, having a sense of God's wrath linked to it.

1. It cannot be understood of the infection of sin. The filth of our nature was not transmitted to him. Though he was made sin, yet he was not made a sinner by any infusion or transplantation of sin into his nature. It was impossible his holiness could be defiled with our filth.

2. But that our sin was the meritorious cause of his punishment. All those phrases, that "Christ died for our sins," 1 Cor. xv. 3. and was "delivered to death for our offences," Rom. iv. 25. clearly import sin to be the meritorious cause of the punishment Christ endured: sin cannot be said to be the cause of punishment, but by way of merit. If Christ had not been just, he had not been capable of suffering for us; had we not been unjust, we had not merited any suffering for ourselves, much less for another. Our unrighteousness put us under a necessity of a sacrifice, and his righteousness made him fit to be one. What was the cause of the desert of suffering for ourselves,

was the meritorious cause of the sufferings of the Redeemer after he put himself in our place. The sin of the offerer merited the death of the sacrifice presented in his stead.

3. Our sins were charged upon him in regard of their guilt. Our sins are so imputed to him, as that they are "not imputed to us," 2 Cor. v. 19. and not imputed to us, because "he was made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. He bore our sins, as to the punishment, is granted. If he were an offering for them, they must in a judicial way be charged upon him. If by being made sin, be understood a sacrifice for sin, (which indeed is the true intent of the word sometimes in scripture,) sin was then legally transferred on the antitype, as it was on the types in the Jewish service by the ceremony of laying on of hands, and confessing of sin, after which the thing so dedicated became accursed, and, though it was in itself innocent, yet was juridically and substitutive nocent. In the same manner was Christ accounted; as on the contrary, believers are personally guilty, but by virtue of the satisfaction of this sacrifice imputed to them, they are judicially counted innocent. Christ, who never sinned, is put in such a state as if he had; and we who have always sinned, are put into such a state by him, as if we never had. As we are made righteous in him, so he was made sin for us. Now, as justifying righteousness is not inherent in us, but imputed to us; so our condemning sin was not inherent in Christ, but imputed to him. There would else be no consistency in the antithesis, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21. He knew no sin,

yet he became sin. It seems to carry it further than only the bearing the punishment of sin. He was judicially charged in our stead with the guilt of sin. Our iniquities were laid upon him, Isa. liii. 6. He had spoken, verse 5. of his bearing the chastisement of our peace, the punishment of our sin, and then seems to declare the ground of that, which consisted in God's imputation of sin to him in laying upon him the iniquities of us all. What iniquities? Our goings astray, our turnings every one to his own way. He made him to be that sin which he knew not, but he knew the punishment of sin, the knowledge of that was the end of his coming: he came to lay down his life a ransom for many. He knew not sin by an experimental inherency, but he knew it by judicial imputation. He knew it not in regard of the spots, but he knew it in regard of the guilt following upon the judgment of God. He was righteous in his person, but not judicially, or juridically* pronounced righteous as our Surety, till after his sacrifice, when he was "taken from prison and from judgment," Isa. liii. 8. Till he had paid the debt, he was accounted as a debtor to God.

(1.) The apostle distinguishes his second coming from his first by this, "He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation," Heb. ix. 28. It is not meant of the filth of sin, for so he appeared at first without sin; but without the guilt of sin which he had at his first coming derived, or taken upon himself to satisfy for, and remove from the sinner. He shall appear without sin to be imputed, without punishment to be inflicted. At

* With legal authority.

the time of his first coming he appeared with sin, with sin charged upon him, as our Surety arrested for our criminal debts; he pawned his life for the lives which we had forfeited, and suffered the penalty due by law, that we might have a deliverance free by grace. In his first coming he represented our persons as an undertaker for us, our sins were therefore laid upon him; in his second coming he represents God, as a Vicegerent, and so no sin can be charged upon him.

(2.) He cannot well be supposed to suffer for our sins, if our sins in regard of their guilt be not supposed to be charged upon him. How could he die, if he were not a reputed sinner? Had he not first had a relation to our sin, he could not in justice have undergone our punishment. He must in the order of justice be supposed a sinner really, or by imputation; really he was not, by imputation then he was. How can we conceive he should be made a curse for us, if that which made us accursed, had not been first charged upon him? It is as much against divine justice to inflict punishment where there is no sin, as it is to spare an offender who hath committed a crime, or to "clear the guilty which by no means God will do," Exod. xxxiv. 7. The consideration of a crime precedes the sentence, either upon an offender or his surety. We cannot conceive how divine justice should inflict the punishment, had it not first considered him under guilt. Though the first designation of the Redeemer to a suretiship or sacrifice for us, was an act of God's sovereignty; yet the inflicting punishment after that designation and our Saviour's acceptation of it, was an act of God's justice, and so declared to be, "to declare his righteousness,

that he might be just," Rom. iii. 26. that he might declare his justice in justification, his justice to his law. Can this highest declaration of justice be founded upon an unjust act? Had that been justice or injustice to Christ, to lay his wrath upon the Son of his love, one whose person was always dear to him, always pleased him, had he not stood as a sinner juridically in our stead, and suffered that sin, which was the ruin of mankind, to be cast, with all the weight of it, upon his innocent shoulders? After, by his own act, he had engaged for our debt, God in justice might demand of him every farthing, which without that undertaking, and putting himself in our stead, could not be done: which submission of his, and compliance with it, is expressed twice, by his not opening his mouth, Isa. liii. 7. and no wrong is done to a voluntary undertaker. Add this too. It is from his standing in our stead as guilty, that the benefit of his death doth redound to us. His death had had no relation to us, had not our sin been juridically adjudged to be his; nor can we challenge an acquittance at the hands of God for our debts, if they were not our debts that he paid on the cross. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities," Isa. liii. 5. The laying hands on the head of the sin-offering, was necessary to make it a sacrifice for the offender; without which ceremony it might have been a slain, but not a sacrificed beast. The transferring our iniquities upon him, must in some way precede his being bruised for them, which could not be any other way than by imputation, whereby he was constituted by God a debtor in our stead, to bear the punishment of our sin; he being made

sin for us, our sin was in a sort made his; he was made sin without sin; he knew the guilt, without knowing the filth; he felt the punishment, without being touched with the pollution. Since death was the wages of sin, and passed as a penalty for a violated law, Rom. vi. 23. it could not righteously be inflicted on him, had not sin first been imputed to him. In his own person he was in the arms of his Father's love; as he represented our sinful persons, he felt the strokes of his Father's wrath.

V. The sufferings of this sacrifice are imputed unto us. He took our sins upon himself, as if he had sinned, and gave us the benefit of his sufferings, as if we had actually suffered and satisfied; he "offered one sacrifice for sin for ever," Heb. x. 12. that is, to take away sin, if you compare it with verse 11. to remove the wrath due to us by reason of iniquity, was the end he aimed at. As our sins were imputed to him for punishment, so his sufferings are imputed to us for acceptation: "Who hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood," Eph. i. 6, 7. Christ had the relation of an undertaker for us, and we the relation of debtors to God; our debts then being charged upon him, his payment must be imputed to us; the surety and the principal are legally regarded as one person, so are the representative and the persons represented by him. As Adam and all mankind were as one person, and as all Israel were called Jacob from the common root of them, so Christ and believers are as one person, and what he did, is as if a believer himself did it, as the suffering of the sacrifice was accepted in lieu of the life of

the sinner By the stripes of our sacrifice, "we are healed," Isa. liii. 5. an exchange is made, stripes to him, health to us; he was made a curse, that we might be freed "from the curse," Gal. iii. 13. The first thing rising upon faith from the sufferings of Christ, is a non-imputation of sin, "not imputing their trespasses unto them;" 2 Cor. v. 29. they are not imputed to a believer, because borne by the undertaker for him. The main end of his death as a sacrifice, was to communicate a righteousness to us: "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," Gal. ii. 21. if this were the main or only thing that would make the death of Christ a mere vanity, then the great and main end of his death, was to procure a complete righteousness for us, a righteousness whereby he was to be glorified, a righteousness whereby we might be justified; his sufferings procured it, his resurrection ensured it, Rom. iv. 25. All the world stands guilty before God, cannot present God with a righteousness of their own, commensurate to the law; not one act any man can do can bear proportion to it; all strength to do any thing suitable to it was lost in Adam. Since no righteousness of our own can justify, it must be the righteousness of the Son of God, which must be imputed to us in the same manner our sins were imputed to him; as it is accepted by God for us, so it is acounted by God to us: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. Sin was in us, but charged upon Christ; righteousness is in Christ, and imputed to us; therefore the apostle adds *him*, to signify, that it

is not our own righteousness, but another's, not inherent in us, but imputed to us.

The redounding of these sufferings to us, ariseth,

1. From the dignity of the person undertaking to be a sacrifice for us, and the union of our nature with his. He assumed our nature, that he might be a common person, and stand in our stead; he had not been a fit representative of us, without it. But the main consideration is, "the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily," Col. ii. 9. and his being the man, God's fellow, Zech. xiii. 7. whereby what he did and suffered in our stead, became, according to the value of the person performing it, infinitely meritorious for those for whom he suffered, being infinitely more than all the obedience of men and angels, and more meritorious of happiness than sin could be of misery. As infinite sin deserves an infinite punishment, because it receives its aggravation from the dignity of the person against whom it is committed; so the sufferings of Christ, though finite in regard of his human nature, received an infinite value from the infiniteness of his person, equivalent to the debts of all that come to him. Sin is finite in regard to the subject, infinite in regard to the great God against whom it is; the sufferings of Christ are infinite in regard of the subject, and infinitely please the Governor of the world, unto whom the offering is made, and therefore are of more force to convey a righteousness and beauty to the creature, than sin is to convey guilt and filth; though "sin abounded, grace did much more abound," Rom. v. 20.

2. From union with this infinite person by faith.

All believers have a communion with him in his death: "If one died for all, then were all dead," 2 Cor. v. 14. All were accounted as dying and bearing the wrath of God, by God's reckoning that death to them. As the sin of Adam is imputed to all his natural posterity, as being one with him in his loins, so are the sufferings of Christ imputed to all his spiritual seed, Rom. v. 18. as being one with him in a real union. Hence we are said to be "crucified with Christ," Rom. vi. 6. and "risen with him," Eph. ii. 6. as in the person representing us; as if the same wrath endured by Christ had been endured by us, and the same acquittance given to Christ, had been given to us by God together with him; for all his meritorious passions were endured by him in the name of his elect, and for their use, and are fully belonging, in the fruit and benefit of them, to every believer. What Christ as a mediator did personally do, redounds in the benefit of it to Christ mystical, and is reckoned to every member of his body; we are made, we, and every one of us that believe, are made the righteousness of God in him. Well, then, Christ bearing our iniquities, is the cause of our justification: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities," Isa. liii. 11. If our sin had not been imputed to him, his righteousness could not be accounted to us; the commutation is clear, he first bears our iniquities, that we might partake of his righteousness.

Use.—If Christ be a sacrifice,

1. We may see the miserable blindness of the Jews in expecting the Messiah as a temporal conqueror. The Jews wait for such a one to this

day. Though the promises represent spiritual deliverances under temporal grandeurs, not to raise carnal hopes, but spiritual apprehensions; yet are there not multitudes of places which speak of sufferings, misery, death? Is not his heel to be bruised, his garments to be parted, a restoration to be made by him of what he took not away? Are not the sacrifices of the law to be perfected, his soul to be made an offering for sin, wounds made for transgression, his hands and his feet to be pierced? It was not by the slaying the bodies of men, that he was to make reconciliation for the iniquities of men, Dan. ix. 24. How can he be a conqueror of kingdoms, who is to be cut off, and the city, where he was, to be destroyed as with a flood, and the desolations of it to be determined? verse 26. penally cut off, as the word signifies, Lev. xvii. 4. as one was cut off that had no sacrifice allowed for him. The right apprehensions of the promises concerning the Messiah in the old testament, what he was to be, what he was to do, cannot let you be ignorant of him in the new. How do those poor people overturn at once the whole design of that divine law they seem to reverence in the highest degree! What blindness will seize upon the hearts of men, even under the oracles of God, if the Spirit of God doth not vouchsafe to enlighten them?

2. If Christ be a sacrifice, it shows the necessity of a satisfaction to the justice of God, and a higher satisfaction than men could perform. Blood must satisfy justice, and no blood but that of the Son of God could be a sufficient and valuable propitiation. If mere mercy could or would have pardoned, it might have done it with or without

the blood of the poor creatures mangled under the law. But, alas! neither the blood of those, nor the blood of a rational creature, could take away sin. Less than death, justice could not demand; death was settled by the immediate order of God, as the penalty of the law. The law then after transgression could not be vindicated in its honour without death. A God of infinite goodness delights not in the shedding the blood of his creatures, nor can we suppose him to be pleased with the effusion of the blood of animals. The institution of the legal sacrifices could not be exemplary to man. What virtue could the pangs of a dying beast represent to him? No other ends can be imagined but an acknowledgment of guilt, the desert of sin, the debt of death, the necessity of a higher satisfaction, and the raising them up to a faith in the promise of God, that another valuable sacrifice should be put in the room of the sinner, to take away that sin, which the blood of beasts, and the eternal groans of men, were not able to remove.

3. Christ, as sacrificed, is the true and immediate object of faith. We are revolted from God, and are made incapable of performing the terms of the first covenant. The precepts of the law are too holy for our corrupt nature, the penalties of the law too grievous to be borne by our feeble nature; a remedy must be looked after. When the venom of sin begins to work in the conscience, and the thunder of the law alarms it to judgment, and the punishment due to sin is presented in the horrors of it, the question immediately is, whether there be any remedy, and where; how forgiveness of sin is to be attained.

The only remedy is proposed in Christ, and Christ as a sacrifice. It is not Christ risen, or ascended, or exalted; not Christ only as the Son of God, or the head of angels; not Christ as the Creator of the world, or by whom all things consist; but Christ as answering the terms of the first covenant, as disarming justice, and this he did as a sacrifice. By this he bore the curse, by this he broke down the partition-wall, by this he joined apostate man, and an offended God. This is what true faith pitcheth on, daily revolves, and daily applies to. This is the first object of the soul, Christ made sin, Christ bearing the punishment, Christ substituted in the room of the offender. His resurrection and ascension come in afterward to ascertain the comfort. But as his being a sacrifice, is the foundation of his being an Advocate, a Prince, a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins; so it is the foundation of peace in ourselves. This is that which pacifies God, and only what pacifies God, can pacify conscience. This death as a sacrifice purchased our comfort, because it purchased the Comforter. Christ begged not the Spirit before he died, John xvi. 7. he assures them he could not come, unless himself went; and he could not have gone with any success to heaven, if he had not shed his blood; justice would have stopped his entrance: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 26. Suffering was to precede his glory. Besides, our comfort lies in his being an Advocate. But how is he an Advocate? With his blood in his hands. It is by his blood he speaks in heaven, and by his blood faith speaks to God. He paid the debt in his suffering, and pleads the payment

in his glory. The payment went before the plea in order of nature, and our eyeing the payment precedes our eyeing the plea in order of faith. Both respect God as the Ruler. Christ without his garments rolled in blood, could not be answerable to God, nor acceptable to a sinner. Faith is therefore called "faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. As faith is the instrument of justification, so it must eye the cause of our justification, and under that notion wherein it is the cause. And that is Christ as groaning and offering up himself to God a ransom, a righteousness for many. The curse upon Adam is the lash wherewith an angry conscience scourgeth a sinner. The freedom from this curse is only found in the vengeance God exacted of the Redeemer for the sins of all that return to him by repentance. Both the death and resurrection of Christ concur to the same end, namely, our justification, Rom. xiv. 9. but in different manners; his death as the meritorious cause, his resurrection as declarative of the sufficiency of his death to that end, that as the Son of God and surety of men, he had performed whatsoever he undertook in his being a sacrifice. But the first act of relying faith is about him as a bloody victim. As often as the Israelites were stung by the fiery serpents, they were to look up for health to the serpent lifted up, a type and emblem of the death of Christ. Upon every sin of a believer, the sacrifice is pleaded in heaven by the Priest, and ought in the remembrance of it to be renewed in the repeated acts of our faith.

4. It is no true opinion that Christ died only for an example. Wounded he was for the transgressions in Isaiah's time, when his example could

reach only those that came after him; but the credit of his sufferings upon his promise to undergo them, might, and did reach the first ages of the world. The expressions in Isaiah liii. found his death higher than a bare pattern, or a testimony to the truth. The notion of expiation of sin, was always implied in the notion of a sacrifice, even among the heathens. When they parted with the dearest first-born of their bodies to Moloch, it was not for an example, but "for the sin of the soul," Micah vi. 7. As Christ was the Son of God sent, he was a testimony of the love of God; as he was a sacrifice, he was our ransom from the curse of the law.

5. Comfort to every true believer. He was sacrificed for us: God counted him a sinner for our sakes, that he might count us righteous for his sake.

(1.) As Christ hath been sacrificed for them, so he has been accepted for them. He is no more to be made sin, iniquity no more to be charged upon him, his next appearance shall be without the imputation of sin, for the conferring salvation, Heb. ix. 28. with all the bonds of a believer's sins cancelled. He is pronounced God's righteous servant, and from this declaration of his righteousness, and the true and believing knowledge of it, doth our justification arise, Isa. liii. 11. Had it not been a perfect sacrifice, it could never have wrought such complete effects, and "for ever have perfected those that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. He is gone with the smoke of his sacrifice to heaven, and was well entertained, which is a signification of the completeness and perfection of his righteousness for man, John xvi. 10. The pure

and piercing eye of divine Justice could not be perceive a spot in him. Had any blemish been, it could not have escaped an infinite knowledge. Nor could the justice of God, in turning over all the registers of the debts owing from the creatures, perceive one but might be cancelled upon the value of this payment, if the creature did not negligently or wilfully refuse his own delivery, and prefer his debts and captivity before it. It was a sacrifice offered according to God's heart, with which his soul was infinitely well pleased The person of the Son of God made every gaping wound, every panting groan, and doleful agony, grateful to God, and profitable for us. The Godhead united to the manhood, put an inexpressible value upon every pang. Not that every pang, or the least drop of blood, was sufficient for our redemption; the law required death, and death must be suffered: but all those passions preceding his death, were meritorious in conjunction with his death.

(2.) This sacrifice unites all the attributes of God together for a believer's interest. The floodgates of mercy are opened, and the fire of justice confined in its flames: the flames of the one centre in Christ, that the streams of the other might flow down to us; rivers of mercy quench not the flames of justice, nor the flames of justice suck up the rivers of mercy. As the sacrificing Christ is a vengeance against sin, it is an act of justice; as it is a means of remission of the sins of those for whom he was sacrificed, it is an act of mercy to the creature. Both Justice and Mercy join hands to help the fallen creature up. God is just in being merciful, and merciful in being just; so that

we well may cry aloud with the psalmist, "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous," Psalm cxvi. 5. Justice struck the sacrifice, that the streams of mercy might have a fuller scope. Compassion helped justice to a satisfaction more honourable than could have been had from creatures; and justice helped mercy to a fuller and more illustrious exercise of itself, than ever it could have had without it. Justice is now a second to mercy; of an antagonist it is become an advocate. God must be unjust, if he be not merciful to a believer. Since our High Priest hath been faithful to God, God will not be unfaithful to him, or those for whom he offered up himself. Happy must he be, that hath mercy supplicating, and justice itself pleading for him.

(3.) This sacrifice is of eternal virtue. The virtue of the sacrifice is parallel to the office of his priesthood: a priest and a sacrifice are relatives. The immutable oath then that constituted him a priest for ever, settles for ever the value and virtue of the sacrifice; for without a sacrifice he could not be a priest; his office would expire, if the virtue of his sacrifice did; they eternally lived together in conjunction. It is the "blood of the everlasting covenant," Heb. xiii. 20. It is an everlasting covenant, because an everlasting blood whereby it was settled. The ground of its prevalence is, that it was not the sacrifice of a mere man, but of God, Heb. ix. 14.

(4.) The effects of this sacrifice therefore are perfect, glorious, and eternal. It is our deliverance from wrath, the scorchings of hell, and terrors of punishment. The purity of this sacrifice expiates the impurities of our services. No sin so

great, but the value of this sacrifice, believed in, can answer it. The highest sin is the transgression of the law, and this is the satisfaction of the whole penalty of the law. Sin is an offence against God, and this sacrifice is the highest pleasure to him. None of our sins can be so great as all those that met upon the back of this innocent Lamb. It is enough to cross every book of accounts; "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, and Christ that died," Rom. viii. 33, 34. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, because he hath as a sacrifice for sin condemned sin in the flesh," Rom. viii. 1, 3. Not, no desert of condemnation; that there is: not, no condemnation, because of something done by themselves; no, but because of something done by Christ, who hath obliterated the bloody roll of sin and curses by his blood. God will not refuse it to any that believingly plead it; he will not be unjust to the true value of it, nor to his own ordination. If it be unrighteous in God to "forget the labour of a believer's love," Heb. vi. 10; it will be so to forget the obedience of his Son, and the person interested in it. God was not so ready to bruise him for us, but he will be as ready to apply the plaister of his blood to us.

How great, then, is the happiness of a believer on the account of this sacrifice! Whatsoever is lost by the sin of the first Adam, is gained by the sacrifice of the second; with what boldness may we enter into the holiest with this blood of Jesus in our hands and hearts! Heb. x. 19.

6. We must then lay hold on this sacrifice. The people were to be "sprinkled with the blood

of the sacrifice," Exod. xxiv. 8. so must we with the blood of our Lamb. Thus only can it save us, 1 Peter i. 2. Thus is our Saviour described by this part of his office, "He shall sprinkle many nations," Isa. lii. 15. Our guilt cannot look upon a consuming fire without a propitiatory sacrifice; our services are blemished, so that they will rather provoke his justice, than merit his mercy; we must have something to put a stop to a just fury, expiate an infinite guilt, and perfume our unsavoury services. Here it is in Christ, but there must be faith in us. Faith is as necessary by the ordination of God in a way of instrumentality, as the grace of God in a way of efficiency, and the blood of Christ in a way of meritoriousness of our justification. All must concur: the will of God the offended Governor, the will of the sacrificing Mediator, and the will of the offender. This will must be a real will, an active operative will, not a faint will. We must have a faith to justify our persons, and we must have an active sincerity to justify the reality of our faith. Christ was real in his sacrifice; God was real in the acceptation of it; we must be real in believing it. Rocks and mountains cannot secure them that neglect so great a sacrifice, that regard this atoning blood as an unholy thing. It is as dreadful for men to have this sacrifice smoking against them, and this blood calling for vengeance on them, as it is comfortable to have it pleaded for them, and sprinkled on them. Why will any then despise and neglect a necessary sovereign remedy ready at hand? Is it excusable, that when we should have brought the sacrifice ourselves, or ourselves have been the sacrifice, we should slight him who hath voluntarily

been a sacrifice for us, and cherish a hell merited by our sin, rather than accept of a righteousness purchased at no less rate than the blood of God? This sacrifice is full of all necessary virtue to save us; but the blood of it must be sprinkled upon our souls by faith. Without this we shall remain in our sins, under the wrath of God, and sword of vengeance.

7. We must be enemies to sin, since Christ was a sacrifice for it. Unless sin die in us, we cannot have an evidence that this sacrifice was slain for us. He that hath an interest in Christ's blood, must be planted "into the likeness of his death," Rom. vi. 5. We are highly unjust, if we will not sacrifice a beloved sin for him, who sacrificed a precious life of more value than heaven and earth for us. We should empty ourselves of our filth, since he emptied himself of his glory. The very expression, "sacrificed for us," carries a force and a spirit in it to animate us to this. We must be friends to the duties God enjoins us. It is disingenuity to put him off with a shred of our souls, or a grain of service, who became a *holocaust** for us. Scanty services are fit only for a scanty sacrifice. As God shows in this sacrifice his compassions to the sinner, so he declares the certainty and terror of his penalties upon the obstinate rebel. If the Son of God, undertaking to be a sacrifice, was not preserved from death upon the account of his filiation;† men cannot expect but to sink under it upon the account of their rebellion. Well then, let us not look upon the least sin without horror, since it is a crime not to

* Burnt-sacrifice wholly consumed.
† His being a Son.

be expiated by any lower price than an infinite blood. It should cause us to mourn also for sin. It was our unrighteousness made Christ's back and his soul to suffer; he had never felt the wrath of his Father, if we had not broken the law of his Father. When the death of Christ, our sacrifice, comes into our thoughts, the remembrance of our sins should bear it company. We should never consider that Christ died, but we should join also with sorrow at the consideration of that for which he died.

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

VOLUNTARINESS OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering, and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour, Ephes. v. 2.

The exhortation in this verse to a mutual love, depends upon what the apostle had urged in the end of the former chapter, where he had endeavoured to persuade them to a kindness and tenderheartedness to one another, and backed it by the pattern God had set them in his pardoning grace; and in verse 1, of this chapter, he extends that motive to all other duties, and draws a general maxim for their observance; that they ought to imitate God in all things imitable by a creature: "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children," verse 1. Consider the great example God hath set you, and as you have obligations to him, not only as your God, but your Father; so imitate him, not only as creatures, but as children, and express in your lives those admirable perfections, which he hath engraven on you by regeneration, and especially his patience and meekness in bearing, and his love and kindness in pardoning, thoes that injure you.

Observe: Those that lay claim to a relation to God, without imitation of him, are not children, but bastards. They may be of his family by instruction, not by descent. There is no implantation in Christ, without an imitation both of the Creator and Redeemer.

He doth prosecute the exhortation in this verse: "Walk in love;" let the perpetual tenor of your lives be in love; and that by the example of Christ, as before he had done it by the example of God, which indeed Christ had in person urged to his disciples before his departure from them: "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you," John xiii. 14, 15. and amplifies this example of the love of Christ.

1. From the effect. His passion. 2. The manner of it. Voluntary; "hath given." 3. The subject of it; "himself." 4. The end of it; "a sacrifice." 5. The event and fruit of it.

"A sweet-smelling savour." A fragrant odour, which by a metalepsis is put for the appeasing God, it having a wonderful force to appease the wrath of God, which was inflamed against us. The most generous example to imitate, is the person of our Saviour; the most efficacious motive to persuade to that imitation, is the sacrifice of our Saviour; the course of our lives ought to be in love, not only an act, a spurt, but a walk. "As Christ hath loved us:" and as of similitude, not of equality; we cannot equal the stature of Christ's affection, but we may draw in our life lineaments like to his.

The latter words are the subject of this discourse: "Loved us." This is the first spring of all the actions of Christ towards us, and the

passion of Christ for us; there could be no other motive, as it respected us. Our misery might excite his pity, but his affection produced his passion; he loved us, as God, in common with his Father; he loved us, as man, by a participation of our nature. In this love, there is his divine will as a priest, his human will as a sacrifice; he pitied us while we were insensibly hurried down by the devil to a gulf of perdition: love was the only impulse, love excited him, love prepared him, love sent him, love offered him; the highest assurance of his love, was the loss of his life, the excellency of the fruit shows the goodness of the tree.

"Has given himself." He was given by God, yet he offered himself; there was a joint consent: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do," John v. 19. It is spoken after the manner of men, as sons learn of their fathers, and imitate them in their actions. Christ's giving himself, implies the Father's giving him.

"Himself." He was both the priest and the sacrifice; he offered not gold or silver, or a whole world, but himself, more precious than millions of worlds, composed only of angels and innumerable spirits, as excellent as the omnipotence of God could create.

"Himself." Not only his body of flesh, not only his soul a spirit, but himself, his whole person. His soul, his body, himself, the Son of God, and the Son of man; he loved us as he loved himself, above what he loved himself, shall I say? He exposed his life for us, his most holy person for us; the act of his murderers is not regarded as a sweet-smelling savour, but his own act of obedience.

To whom did he thus give himself? "To God" To that God, to whom, by our base apostasy, we had rendered ourselves obnoxious, and had fallen under his deserved wrath. Our Saviour was God's before, as he was the Son of God, but he delivers himself to God, as a mediator, a victim to satisfy for our sins, and reconcile us to our injured Creator; he offered himself to God, as the judge and revenger of sin, the guardian of the law, the assertor of his truth in his threatening; he appeared before God as sitting upon a seat of justice, that he might open to us a throne of grace.

To what end did he deliver himself? "An offering and a sacrifice." Not *like* an offering, or *like* a sacrifice, but an offering, a sacrifice; not to do us a small kindness, but to offer his life for us; he would die in our stead, that we might live by his death; not only an offering, but a sacrifice, an incense to be consumed into smoke, a sacrifice to be stuck and bled to death; all the offerings and sacrifices of the law were completed in Christ. All his life wherein he acted for the glory of God, was an offering; in his death, he bled and expired as a sacrifice; he underwent a death, not honourable, but ignominious, and not only ignominious among men, but joined with the legal curse of God. As he was the Son of God, he gave himself, having power to do it, John x. 18. Unless he had been the Son of God, he could not have been a sufficient sacrifice for us.

"For a sweet-smelling savour." He gave himself with an intention to be accepted, and God received him with a choice acceptation. Sacrifices under the law were accounted by God as a sweet savour, Lev. i. 9. iii. 16. Exod. xxix. 41. This

expression is first mentioned at the time of the sacrifice of Noah, Gen. viii. 21. so God is said to smell an offering, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. God accepted Noah's sacrifice, and took an occasion from thence of declaring his counsel to Noah, that he would not destroy the world, implying, that he would in time recover it by the promised Seed. A smell is here attributed to God. As good scents recreate and refresh the sense of a man, so did the sacrifice of Christ please and content God. Our sins had sent up an ill savour to heaven, had disturbed the rest of God. Christ expels our ill scent by the perfume of his blood, and restores a sweet savour in the heavenly places, " purifying the heavenly things himself," Heb. ix. 23. God being a pure Spirit, could not be taken with the smoke of the legal lambs, nor refreshed with the fumes of incense; but both God and believers under the old testament had a content in them, as they were shadows of this sweet sacrifice, which was intended for the appeasing God, and securing the offending creature. What the legal sacrifices could not perform, as being earthy, mean, and too low for the acceptation of God, and delighted him no otherwise than as they referred to Christ, that this sweet sacrifice of the unblemished Lamb of God, possessed with a perfect love both to God's glory and man's safety, performed, and sent up such a fragrance to the nostrils of God, that he approved both of the priest and the sacrifice, infinitely above the best sacrificers and sacrifices under the law, and changed his countenance towards the filthy creature, that had raised such noisome streams in his presence.

The things observable are many: 1. The love of

Christ was the spring of his passion. 2. The person of Christ was consecrated for us, and given to us.

But the only things I shall take notice of, are, 1. CHRIST WAS A VOLUNTARY SACRIFICE. 2. CHRIST WAS AN EFFICACIOUS SACRIFICE.

Doct. 1. THE SACRIFICE AND SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST FOR US WERE FREE AND VOLUNTARY. His offering was a free-will offering. It is expressed in the same chapter: "He gave himself for the church," Eph. v. 25. His voluntariness was typified by the paschal lamb, a lamb being the mildest of all creatures, resisting neither the shearers nor butchers, Isa. liii. 7. All his work is assigned to his love, Rev. i. 5, 6. His love was antecedent to his shedding his blood, and our being washed in it. Love renders any work delightful. The Sun of righteousness hath not a less bridegroom spirit and cheerful disposition in running his humble race, than a sun in the heavens is expressed to have, by the psalmist, in running his natural race in the heavens, Psa. xix. 5. He was not made poor by force, but became so, and laid aside his own riches for our sakes, 2 Cor. viii. 9. He became destitute of the advantages other men enjoy, that from his worldly poverty we might become rich in spiritual graces. He was not emptied of his glory by another, but made himself of no reputation: he took upon him the form of a servant, it was not imposed upon him by constraint: he was not debased by others, till he had humbled himself to the lowest degree of humility. He could have resisted them when they lifted him up upon the cross, but he would be obedient to the

determination of his Father to the last gasp, Phil. ii. 7, 8. The hiding the majesty of God under the form of a servant, his descent not only to the earth, the lowest dregs of the world, the footstool of the Divinity, but to the most abject and forlorn condition in that earth. His taking the similitude of weak flesh, and running through all the degrees of reproaches and punishment, even to the grave itself, were voluntary acts, the workings of his love, that he might rescue us from a deserved hell, to advance us to an undeserved heaven, and make us partakers of that blessedness he had voluntarily quitted for our sakes. He willingly put himself into the condition of a servant, which is to be at the beck of another, and have no will but that of his master's. He submitted his reason and affections to God, to be employed in his work according to his will. He had an absolute power over his own body, John x. 18. yet he made a free offer of it, and subjected it to the penalty to be inflicted on him. One place more: "For their sakes I sanctify myself," John xvii. 19. It cannot be meant of his consecration to his office of priesthood, that depended upon the call of his Father; he was constituted a Priest, not by his own intrusion, but the Father's election, settled by an oath; the Father, and not himself, glorified him in this regard, Heb. v. 4, 5: nor of his habitual and inward holiness, for so he was sanctified by the Spirit in his conception, and filled with all graces, Luke i. 35. John iii. 34; but it is meant of his offering himself a sacrifice: his Father made him a Priest, the Spirit made his human nature fit to be a sacrifice; his own will made him an actual offering.

In the handling this doctrine, I shall do these four things.

I. Lay down some propositions for explaining this.

II. The evidences of this voluntariness.

III. The necessity of it.

IV. The use.

I. Propositions for explaining it.

1. The Father's appointing him to be a sacrifice doth not impair his own willingness in undertaking. The Father is said to send him, and deliver him, John iii. 34. Rom. viii. 32. Not that the Son was over-persuaded, or came only out of obedience, without any inclination of his own. The Father being the root and fountain of the Deity, all actions are originally ascribed to him, though common to all; so he is first in order of being, as he is first in order of working. The Father is said to deliver him, because the first motion of redemption is supposed to arise from the will and motion of the Father; yet the love of Christ was the spring of all mediatorial actions, and his taking our nature on him; and therefore he is no less said to give himself than the Father is said to give him to us, and for us. God is said to set him forth, Rom. iii. 25. yet he is said to come, Matt. xx. 28. Not thrust out, or forced to come. God lays our sins upon him, yet Christ is said to bear them. His engagement was an act of choice, liberty, and affection. He could not be constrained by his Father to undertake it. His will was as free in consenting, as his Father was in proposing. The Spirit is said to be sent by the Father and the Son, to take of Christ's, and show it to us, to fit those for heaven that are given to Christ; yet his

distributions are according to his own will, 1 Cor. xii. 11. dividing to every man according as he will. If you consider Christ as one God with the Father, there is but one and the same will in both: will belongs to essence, or nature; the essence of God being one, there are not in God divers wills, though the Godhead be in divers persons, because the power of willing is the nature, not a personal propriety. The decree of redemption was joint in Father and Son. What Christ decreed as God, he executed as man. And what he willed from eternity, he began in time to will as man. Christ, as God, gave himself to death with the same will, and by the same action, as the Father gave him; but as man, he gave himself by a will inspired by the Father. Yet for our conception's sake, the scripture represents things so as if they were distinct wills, which yet we must not imagine, any more than because the scripture in condescension to our weakness represents God with eyes, and ears, and hands, we must conceive God to have a fleshly body like ours.

2. The necessity of his death impeacheth not the voluntariness of it. Many things are voluntary, which yet are necessary; there are voluntary necessities. God is necessarily, yet voluntarily holy; the devils are necessarily, yet voluntarily evil. It is not in their power to become good, yet they are carried to evil with a complete will. Man desires to be happy by a natural, and therefore necessary inclination, yet willingly and without constraint. This death was necessary by a determination of God; voluntary, by a cheerful submission of Christ. The election of the good angels rendered their standing necessary, but the adherence of their wills

to God made their standing also voluntary. Grace did not force them against their will, nor God's determination of Christ render him a sacrifice against his mind.

(1.) It was voluntary in the foundation. The decree was not necessary, but an act of divine liberty. Nothing can incline God to an act of grace, but his own most holy will. Christ being at liberty whether he would espouse our interest or not, his undertaking to manage it was a pure voluntary act, arising from his own will. He was not bound to become a creature, and take upon him the form of a servant, but his entering into that condition was an act of free choice and condescension. No reason can possibly be supposed, why the Son of God, and Lord of the creation, should make himself lower than the angels for us, by any necessity of his own condition. There was, indeed, a necessity for us who could not be redeemed without him, but no necessity arising from the divine nature. If a creature ready to be famished be in a place where there is only one person of ability and sufficiency to relieve him, there is a necessity on the part of the poor creature to be relieved, and relieved by that person, since there is no other to help him, but there is no necessity on the part of the sufficient person to relieve him; the help he affords him will be a mere act of charity. This act of Christ is therefore called grace: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," 2 Cor. viii. 9. nothing could move him to become either a creature or a servant in a created state, but the yearnings of his own bowels towards fallen and miserable man.

(2.) It was necessary after this engagement. His engagement to make himself liable to punishment in our stead was free, but when he had entered into bonds to the Judge of heaven and earth, he was then in his power to be delivered up to death, according to that obligation which he subscribed and consented to; he was then legally, and by his own consent, bound to perform what he had undertaken, and could not justly detract. The promises of Christ are without repentance, as well as the gifts of God. After Christ had put himself into the state of a creature, and form of a servant, the homage due from a creature to God, and the work of a servant after his ear was bored, was necessary, and could not be refused by him. He had then broke his word passed to his Father in the covenant of redemption, had he absolutely declined it. "He ought to die as Christ;" Luke xxiv. 46. that is, as clothed with our nature for such an end. He needed not to die, as he was the Son of God by eternal generation, and lay in the bosom of his Father; but it was necessary as he was made under the law, made Christ, that is, anointed to such a purpose. It was necessary also, in regard of the truth of God laid to pawn in several promises, prophecies, and legal representations; but still the fountain of all this was the free bubbling up of infinite affection to mankind. Yet this necessity was a necessity of immutability, not of constraint. The holy and unchangeable will which complied with the first proposal, remained in force till the final execution. The will of the eternal Spirit, whereby he offered himself to his Father, was immutable. It is a necessity arising from himself, and the perfection of his own nature; from his own holy will, not from

any constraint. God cannot be constrained, liberty is so essential a property of the divine nature, that though it may determine itself, it cannot constrain itself. To be God is a term of infinite power, to be constrained is a term of impotency: these are contradictions in the Godhead. Besides, in his human nature he could not sin, he could not be overcome by the devil, he could find nothing in him as a foundation to stand upon, John xiv. 30. He could not do any thing against his Father. But to desert his suretyship had been contrary to that law to which he had subjected himself; the word of the oath, whereby he was constituted a priest, had been fruitless. It had been the utter ruin of all the gracious decrees of God, because all the elect were "chosen in him," Eph. i. 4, 5. the covenant with Abraham and the patriarchs had been null; the oath which he sware to them, broken, Luke i. 73. and the foundation of their faith falling, the whole superstructure had been dissolved, and they would have believed God in vain. All this necessity is no plea against his willingness. The obligation which the truth of God lays upon him, after he hath promised, doth not diminish his first kindness and grace in making the promise. As the necessity of his death did not extenuate the Jews' sin in butchering him, so neither doth it lessen Christ's willingness in laying down his life after he had voluntarily entered into our bonds.

(3.) Though his death was violent in regard of man, yet this doth not abate the voluntariness in regard of himself. Judas betrayed him, the serjeants apprehended him, Pilate condemned him, and the soldiers crucified him: these were but

instruments to execute "the counsel of God," Acts iv. 28. yet he need not have been apprehended unless he would; he showed his power to escape, not only the united force of the Jewish nation, but of the whole world, by striking his apprehenders to the ground with the majesty of his looks. He that can rescue himself from the hands of men, and will not, may be said to die willingly, though he die violently. They slew him as murderers, and made him a sacrifice to their revenge, not to God, "with wicked hands," Acts ii. 23. and with wicked minds too. He was the sole offerer of himself, as it respected God, and advantaged us. Judas willingly delivered him, Pilate with an imperfect will condemned him, the Jews delightfully reproached him, but the intention of none of them was to make him a sacrifice of redemption. It was for "our sakes he sanctified himself," John xvii. 19. but it was not for our sakes the Jews butchered him. Judas delivered him for the silver, and Pilate condemned him to preserve his grandeur; but he delivered himself with an excessive affection for us. His murderers had no regard to the making him an expiation for the sin of the world; his oblation to God as a sacrifice, was an act purely of his own will at the very time of his death, not of his enemies' rage. In this capacity his death was solely the fruit of his love, and the hovering of his soul over the lost sons of Adam; it did not arise from a necessity of nature, but the will of his mercy to us; he gave himself, and gave himself out of love, Gal. ii. 20. Enemies did not give him, nature did not give him. The inward transports and affections of his soul, the actings of his choicest graces, whereby his offering was rendered acceptable to

God, his murderers were not the cause of; they had not force enough to crucify him, had not a joy been set before him, which made him "endure the cross," Heb. xii. 2. that is, the things wherein he rejoiced, as those things are called our hope, which are the object of our hope. The joy of Christ, which made him despise the shame and ignominy of the cross, was the glorious good he should procure by his suffering, the expiation of sin, reconciliation of God, the new creation of the world; for the producing and ripening such fruits did he hang upon the tree. This gave him contentment and pleasure in the midst of his indignities, and this was increased, not impaired by the fury of his enemies. Though his death, in regard of men, was violent, yet, as the death of a sacrifice, it was wholly voluntary.

(4.) When our Saviour seemed unwilling to it in the time of his agony, he was then highly willing. This was when he prayed earnestly that the cup might pass from him, and begins, "Father, save me from this hour," John xii. 27. The strugglings of innocent nature do both times end not only in a gracious submission to the will of God, but in an ardent desire that the will and glory of God might have their full accomplishment. "But for this cause came I unto this hour, therefore, Father, glorify thy name," do thine own work, and finish every part of thy will in me, and what thou hast appointed me to undergo. The state Christ was in must needs admit of some shrinkings in his nature, encompassed with our infirmities; he saw the comfortable influences of God suspended, the indignation of God for our sins breaking out, the guilt of innumerable iniquities imputed to him, and

the law with all its curses edged against him, and himself left to bear the weight of all this, and conflict with a wrath no creature ever bore before. The apprehensions of all these meeting in a clear understanding, could not but raise suitable passions of fear and trouble in his human nature. If he had not known the greatness of the punishment he was to endure for our redemption, he had undertaken to ransom us from he knew not what. If he had not feared it, he had not been a sensible man; if he had not trembled at it, he had not been an innocent man. Suitable affections to God in his carriage towards us, are the necessary duties of a creature. God is the object of fear in his vindictive justice, which Christ then was to be subject to. It had not consisted with that reverence which Christ always showed to God, not to be sensible of the sharpness of those punishments which were then providing for him as a substituted criminal in our stead. Though the person of our Saviour was but one, yet he, having two natures, had two wills, a divine and a human, otherwise he were not God and man. If he had not a human soul, he were not a man; and if he had not a human will, he had not a human soul; as he truly took our nature, so he took the laws of it, whereby it cannot love pain, but shun whatsoever it apprehends hurtful to it. As death was an evil against nature, he desires to decline it; as it was to be an atonement for sin, and appeasing of wrath through the dignity of the sacrifice, he desires to undergo it; he regarded it as man, and so had some reluctance to it; he regarded it as a man designed for such an end, and therefore submitted to it. "But for this cause came I unto this hour." As it was a dissolution of nature,

a fruit of God's displeasure against sin, and should for a time exclude his soul and body from the fruition of the divine favour and glory, though the personal union should not be dissolved, he startled at it; for the more Christ loved the sense of the divine love, which he enjoyed in his life, the more grievous would the apprehension of the want thereof be. But when he considered, that he was united to that nature, that he might suffer in it, and lay it down as a sacrifice to that Justice which brandished a naked sword against man, that without it the world could not be freed from that misery sin had hurled it into, he then put his neck under the cross. As a patient, who considering the potion offered as bitter, abhors it, but remembering the intention of the physician, and the beneficial qualities of the medicine, doth readily accept it: both the abhorrence and the acceptance are acts of the same will upon divers considerations; or rather the abhorrence is an act of nature regarding it as distasteful, the acceptance is an act of reason regarding it as wholesome. Now, was not the will of Christ as Mediator as victorious in the issue over the reluctance, as it had been in the capacity of a man desirous of the removal of the cup? The human will vails* to the divine will, and conforms itself, not only in a quiet posture, to the resolves of God, but in an ardent desire that his will might be performed. There was more of obedience in "Thy will be done, not mine," and more of ardent affections in "Father, glorify thyself," than there was of reluctancy in "Let this cup pass from me," or, "Save me from this hour." He disclaims the will of his human nature, to perform the will of his Father's mercy

* Yields.

II. Wherein this voluntariness of Christ's death appears.

1. He willingly offered himself in the first counsel about redemption to stand in our stead. When our necks were upon the block, and the blow from justice was otherwise unavoidable, Christ steps in, diverts the blow from us to himself, and declares himself willing to suffer what we had merited, that we might escape upon that suffering. The Father proposed it, the Son consented to it: the will of God is antecedent to the consent of Christ, "I come to do thy will, O my God," Psa. xl. 7. which will was the will of God for our sanctification through the "offering of the body of Christ," Heb. x. 10. Though he knew every thorn in the way he was to pass, the greatness of the wrath he was to undergo, yet his heart leaped into the Father's arms with a full and ready consent at the first overture. The Father proposed it not with more affection than the Son entertained it with delight, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." He was loth to leave expressing it, "I come;" that is not all, "I delight to do thy will;" nor doth it rest there, "Thy law is within my heart:" it is so settled, that it cannot be rooted out but with the utter dissolution of my heart. Thus in the volume, or the beginning of the book, it is written of him. In the book of Genesis, in the first promise, the second person in the Trinity, who is supposed to appear to our first parents after the fall, represents himself a suffering Saviour, and testifies his own consent to the suffering he was to undergo, as the seed of the woman by having his heel bruised by the serpent, and the victory he was to obtain by breaking the serpent's head. When the counsel was resolved

upon, Christ is said to "delight in the habitable parts of the earth," Prov. viii. 31. His consent was passed before the world was; it was a delight to him, because of the glory of God's grace, to be made illustrious in the sacrifice of himself. It cannot be meant of the first creation, for that is supposed, and there could be no exulting delight in that, since the defilement of it by sin presently succeeded the laying on the top-stone. It is meant therefore of the restoration of the world, which was to be wrought by this wisdom of God. Some, to invalidate the deity of Christ, understand by wisdom in that book and chapter an intellectual habit, which is ridiculous. The antiquity of the wisdom here spoken of, is before the mountains were settled, and before there were any fountains abounding with water. The wisdom here described was present with God, when he made the world. It was entirely familiar with him, there was such a familiarity between God and wisdom, as between a father and a son, verse 30. "I was by him as one brought up with him," and peculiarly the delight of God.

2. The whole course of his life manifests this willingness. His will stood right to this point of the compass all his life. He never had any defect in his understanding, nor did his memory of what was appointed for him ever fail him. In the time of his life he frequently mentioned the tragedy to be acted upon him, the manner of his death by lifting up on the cross, John iii. 14. And he who was intimately acquainted with the prophets, knew every circumstance of his death predicted in them. Many enter the lists with difficulties out of ignorance, but the willingness of our Saviour cannot

be ascribed either to ignorance or forgetfulness. He knew long before that Judas was to betray him, before such a design entered into the heart of Judas, John vi. 64. yet cashiered him not from his family. He foretold the hour of his death; his desires were strong for it, he was straitened till he was baptized with that bloody baptism, Luke xii. 50. He had little ease in his own bowels, as though it were a kind of death to him not to be a sacrifice: and when Peter would have dissuaded him from suffering, he useth him as smartly as he would have done the devil: "Get thee behind me, Satan," Matt. xvi. 23. implying that in that speech he was the same enemy, by giving him the same title. And the night before, he doth solemnly oblige himself to suffer by his deed, as well as he had before by his word; he makes his testament in the institution of the supper, and delivers his will into the hands of his disciples. His heart was bent to wade through it; he gave them his blood in the sacrament, to show how freely he would pour it forth the following day in a sacrifice; the free distribution of his body to them represented the free offering up his body for them.

3. At the time of his death, he manifested this voluntariness in his whole carriage. When the time drew near, he declined it not; he would enter Jerusalem with hosannas, as if, when he went to his death, he went to his triumph; and indeed it was so, for by that oblation of himself upon the cross, "he triumphed over principalities and powers," Col. ii. 15. He went into the garden, which was as it were the bringing himself to the door of the tabernacle to be offered to God. He had at the passover bid Judas execute quickly his

traitorous intention, and now quickens the high priests' dull officers to apprehend him, when he told them twice, himself was the person they sought. He summoned not one angel to take arms for his rescue, though he could have commanded legions to attend him; but as he had rebuked Peter before for dissuading him, he now rebukes him for defending him; moved thereto by an ardency of zeal to drink the cup: "Shall I not drink of the cup which my Father hath given me?" John xviii. 11. He would not court the protection of Herod by working a miracle to please his curiosity. As he would have no relentings himself, so he would not endure them in others; and therefore dissuades the women from expressing their natural affection in a few tears, Luke xxiii. 28. His soul was not wrung and torn from him, but he rendered his spirit into the hands of his Father, and cried with a loud voice before that last act; so that he died not by a defect of strength, but by an ardency of will. He was more delighted with his sufferings for us, than we can be with the greatest worldly pleasures and grandeur, and valued reproaches for us above the empire of the world. To conclude: his soul was not torn from him, but "he poured it out," Isaiah liii. 12. even that which was dearest to him, as a man doth water, freely and willingly out of the vessel, "he poured out his soul unto death;" he ordered death to come and fetch it.

III. Why this voluntariness was necessary.

1. On the part of the person.

2. On the part of justice.

3. On the part of acceptation.

1. On the part of the sacrifice itself. He was above any obligation to that work he so freely

undertook for us. When he made himself of no reputation, it was a work of his charity, not of necessity; and he was bound in no other bonds, but those of his own love. Nor could he be over-ruled to any thing against his own consent; for, being God "equal with the Father," Phil. ii. 6. he was subject to no law, nor could be constrained to bend under the terms and penalties of it. Christ as the second person was not under a law any more than the Father; for he was "in the form of God," that is, had the same essence with God. Suppose he had been incarnate without entering into any bonds for us, though so far as he was man, he was bound actively to obey the precepts of the law, yet not bound to endure the penalties of the law, unless he had been a transgressor of the precept: he was to have obeyed it as a creature, but not suffer the curse, unless he had been a guilty creature. But he was not only made under the law, as an innocent creature, but "in the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3. as like as possible could be, sin only excepted; and therefore observed those ceremonial precepts which concerned creatures, as sinful; as circumcision, though he had no lust in his human nature to be cut off, and baptism, though he had no stain to be washed away. And indeed, as he was not, so he could not be a transgressor, being secured by his conception from any original taint, and by the hypostatical union from any actual spot: if he could possibly have been a transgressor, the salvation of the elect had been contingent. Being a creature, of the seed of the woman, he may be supposed to be under the condition of the covenant of nature; yet not violating that covenant, he could not justly die for himself.

2. Necessary on the part of justice. The satisfaction for sin was to be made by death, because man upon his revolt from God, was by the immutable law bound over to death. Man could not satisfy the law but by death, and so must have lain under the bonds of that death for ever, and no convenient way could be found for his rescue, unless some one, who was not obnoxious to that penalty by nature, should suffer in his stead that death which he owed. Now, had it not been an injustice to inflict a punishment upon a person purely innocent, and unwilling to render himself in the place of the criminal? No man can be justly constrained to pay either a pecuniary or criminal debt for another without his own consent, either actual at the time of paying or suffering, or legal, when, by entering into the same bonds, he hath made himself legally one person with the debtor or offender. Had not Christ voluntarily undertaken it, justice had been wronged instead of being satisfied. It could upon no account have been just to punish one that had not been guilty upon his own score, or by substitution. The satisfaction of justice in one kind had been an injury to it in another. Well then; the will of Christ could not have saved us without his suffering, because, as the law had denounced death, justice was to be satisfied by death. Nor could the sufferings of Christ have saved us, without his will; for none can be an involuntary surety: had he not consented to have our sins imputed to him, the punishment of our sins could not have been inflicted on him. To take from any what is not due, and when they are unwilling to part with it, is rapine.

3. Necessary in regard of acceptation. Christ's

consent was as necessary as God's order. Had Christ suffered for us without the consent of his Father, the Judge of the world, though his sufferings had been of infinite value, because of the dignity of his person, yet God had not been obliged to look upon us as concerned in him, nor count him to us, or for us; and had not Christ consented that they should be for us, they could not justly have been accepted for us, or applied to us. It had been an alienating the goods against the will of the donor. As God's order makes his sacrifice capable of being satisfactory, so the consent of Christ makes it capable of being accepted for us, and applied to us. The heathens would not offer a beast that came struggling to the altar; but God, under the law, regarded not the reluctance of the sacrifice, but the free-will of the offerer, which was necessary to make the sacrifice a sweet savour. How much more necessary is the voluntariness of that person who was to be both sacrifice and priest! Love belongs to the integrity of a sacrifice, a burnt body without charity is of no value, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. The merit of his death depended not upon the act of dying, or the penal part in that death, but upon his willing obedience in it, in conjunction with the dignity of his person; and without this, his soul might have expired without being a sacrifice. As the disobedience of Adam rendered the world obnoxious to wrath, so by the voluntary oblation of Christ, justification is conferred upon believers, Rom. v. 19. His love made his sacrifice a sweet-smelling savour. By the pouring out his soul is our redemption wrought, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul unto death," Isa. liii. 12. or, He shall partake

of the spoil with the strong, he shall take us as his own spoils, who were before the devil's prey, and restore to us that blessedness which the devil rifled us of. We are restored, and himself exalted, not merely because he died, but because he died willingly. In vain had we hoped for the benefit of a forced redemption.

IV. Use.

1. The way of redemption by a sacrifice was necessary. Why should Christ so willingly undertake this task, be a man of sorrows, lay himself down into the grave, if the atonement of our sins could have been procured at an easier rate? He that made the world by a word, would have redeemed us by a word, if it had been consistent with his own honour. It is at least necessary for God's greater honour, and man's surer benefit. The application of it to us must be as necessary as the oblation of it for us. Think not a few tears, the heat-drops of a natural repentance, can expiate those sins for which Christ thought the best blood in his heart so necessary to be shed.

2. The death of Christ for us was most just on the part of God. What Christ did willingly submit to, God might justly charge upon him as a due debt. That man who will enter into bond to secure the debt to the creditor, or satisfy for the criminal to the governor, may justly be sued upon default of payment by the one, and arrested for default of appearance by the other; what he promised may justly be demanded of him.

3. How wonderful was the love of Christ! To accept so willingly of such hard conditions for us, and die so ignominiously upon the cross we had deserved! He knew the burden of sin, he knew

the terrors of hell, yet he did not shrink from the imputation of the one, or the sufferings of the other; it was not a willingness founded upon ignorance, but upon a clear-sighted affection. He was willing to be reproached, that we might be glorified; he would be like to us, that we might be conformed to him; and took our human nature, that we might in a sort partake of his divine. O wonderful love! to open his breast to receive into his own heart the sharp edge of that sword which was directed against us. Had not his feet been well shod with love, he would soon have turned back, and said his way was unpassable. A courtesy is enhanced by the greater ingrediency of the will in it; our Saviour had a double will in this matter, the will of the divine, and the will of his human nature, like two streams from distant parts meeting together in conjunction. Worse than devils are we, if we are not ravished with so great an affection, which made him leave the heaven of his Father's presence for a time, to pass through our hell in the dregs of the creation.

4. How willingly then should we part with our sins for Christ, and do our duty to him! O that we could in our measures part as willingly with our lusts, as he did with his blood! He parted with his blood when he needed not, and shall not we with our sins, when we ought to do so, for our own safety, as well as for his glory. Since Christ came to redeem us from the slavery of the devil, and strike off the chains of captivity, he that will remain in them, when Christ with so much pains and affection hath shed his blood to unloose them, prefers the devil and sin before a Saviour, and will find the affront to be aggravated by the

Redeemer's voluntariness in suffering for his liberty. How willingly should we obey him, who so willingly obeyed God for us! Christ did not let his enemies snatch away his life, but laid it down; our duties should not be wrung from us, but gently distil from us. The more will in sin, the blacker; the more will in obedience, the sweeter. It is in this we should imitate our great pattern.

Having despatched the first doctrine about the voluntariness of Christ's death, from those words "hath given himself;" I proceed to speak of the acceptableness of it, from this latter clause of the verse. Allusion is made here to the perfume God commanded under the law, Exod. xxx. 34. The spices were to be pounded, and afterwards put into a censer, to be dissolved into a sweet fume, in the Levitical service: Christ was bruised by his humiliation, to be rendered a sweet perfume to God.

Doct. II. The sacrifice of Christ was acceptable to God, and efficacious for Men. There was a complete satisfaction made to God, the supreme Judge offended, pleasing to him, and effectual to free the guilty party from the obligation to the deserved punishment. Christ was white, in regard of his innocence; ruddy, in regard of his bloody passion: both put together, made him the "chiefest among ten thousand," Cant. v. 10 The efficacy of this sacrifice in many fruits of it, is fully expressed, "The transgression was finished, an end put to sin," Dan. ix. 24. the apostasy of Adam was checked, the idolatry of

the Gentiles overthrown, the atonement of sin made, which could not be by the legal sacrifices; righteousness pleasing to God, and therefore everlasting, introduced; all the predictions of him fulfilled, whereupon he is anointed, that is, fully settled in all his offices, and declared by that anointing to be a complete sacrifice, and the Prince of our salvation. The last words our Saviour spake upon the cross, gave us an assurance of this. He saw and knew the work completely performed, and then gave up the ghost: "When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost," John xix. 30. All the prophecies of what I was to do, are accomplished; I have nothing else now to do, to render my undertaking complete, but the bowing down my head, and sending out my last breath to my Father. All the sacrifices of the law, the daily and anniversary sacrifices, were shadows and images of him, and fulfilled in their main design in and by him. It could not be otherwise than acceptable; since there was no omission of any thing required of him, no commission of any thing forbidden to him. The whole law, both the mediatorial law, and the law of nature, were within his heart; the whole law was answered by his life. He paid an obedience, not by measure, as he had received the Spirit not by measure, to prepare him to be a victim for our redemption. It was acceptable to God for us; so must the apostle be understood. It was a sweet savour to God for those persons, and those ends, for which he gave himself. As it was a sacrifice intended and offered to God for us, so it was accepted as

a sweet smelling savour by God for those persons and ends.

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Premise two things for the explication of it.

II. Prove it.

III. Apply it.

I. I shall premise two things for the explication of it.

1. God was not absolutely bound to accept it for us. Though this sacrifice was infinitely valuable in itself; and had it been without a divine order, might have been counted a testimony of affection to the honour of God, and the good of the creature: yet God might have refused any acceptance of it for us; he might have rejected every sacrifice, but that of the offender. If we consider it simply in itself, without any previous order, without any covenant struck between the Father and the Son concerning it, he was not obliged to have any respect to the apostate creature, upon the account of it. But after a covenant struck between them, wherein it was agreed that Christ should lay down his soul as a ransom, and offer himself an unblemished sacrifice for the sons of men, and that he should see the travail of his soul, and by his righteousness justify many, after he had borne their iniquities in his own body on the tree, Isa. liii. 10, 11. God could not but accept it, unless he could have found a spot in the offering, and charged him with a non-performance of any article covenanted between them. If it were according to the tenor of the covenant of redemption, it could not be refused by God, being consequent to his decree and promise. But if we consider it in itself, God was not bound to accept it for us, though he

might have had a high esteem of it: for, according to the tenor of his law, he might have demanded a compensation from the person of the sinner, and laid the punishment upon the person upon whom he found the guilt, and exacted the life of the sinner as a sacrifice for the sin. The acceptableness of this sacrifice was from itself, in regard of the dignity of the person, the infiniteness of the sacrifice; but the actual acceptation of it for us, was from the covenant and agreement between them. When a man offers to give a thousand pounds for that which is not worth a thousand pence, the sum is not only a valuable, but an overvaluable consideration for that which is desired; but the acceptation of this sum from the other, depends upon the will of the person whose property it is. The death of Christ was a sacrifice of a valuable consideration for the sin of the world, and sufficient to expiate the greatest crimes both for number and weight: but the receiving of it upon such an account, depended upon the will of the Lawgiver, whose authority was violated in the breach of the law, and who, as the only Judge, had passed sentence on the offending creatures, and had "concluded all under sin," Rom. xi. 32. and sentenced the whole world, "under condemnation," Rom. iii. 19. It must be accepted by him, it had not else been of itself valid for us. In regard, therefore, of the value of this sacrifice, all the beneficial fruits of it streaming upon the creature, are in scripture ascribed to the death of Christ: but in regard of God's acceptation of it for us, they are ascribed to the grace of God; to the grace of God, as appointing and accepting; to the death of Christ, as procuring and purchasing. The grace

of God gave a virtue to the mediation of Christ, in regard of its application to us; but the death of Christ had a value in itself, whether it had been accepted for us or not, or ordered by God to be applied to us. And as God respects the agreement in the promise he makes to us, so Christ doth not enter any pleas in respect of the intrinsic worth of his blood, but makes this agreement the foundation of them: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," John xvii. 4. The prevalency of it for us depended upon God's order. Indeed, had he not finished the work, he could not have challenged the reward promised: there was to be merit on his part, before a reward on God's. Yet the sufferings on his part may be conceived without any reward on God's part, if considered separate from this agreement and divine transaction between them. We must not understand this, as though, if God had not been obliged to dignify Christ for his sufferings, by the promise he had made him, he would not have rewarded those sufferings out of mere goodness; for since God in his own nature is infinitely good, he cannot but love holiness and affection to him, and testify his approbation of it by some retribution.

2. As the acceptation of it depended upon the will of the Lawgiver and Ruler, so the acceptableness of it depended upon the will of the Redeemer. The apostle therefore saith, "He gave himself for us;" the sweetness of it depended upon the will of the donor, in concurrence with the will of God. The more of will there is in any act of a creature's obedience, the more savoury it is to the divine majesty, to whom it is paid: his love both to God and us made his sacrifice a

sweet smelling savour. The merit of his death depended not upon his mere dying, or upon the penal part in that death; but upon his willing obedience in it, in conjunction with the dignity of his person: without this, he might have breathed out his soul without being a victim. Had not Christ's will been full and firm in it, that his sufferings should be for us, they could not justly have been accepted for us, or applied to us; it could not have been a payment of our debt, and the application of him to us had been an alienating the goods of another against the will of the proprietor. This sweet savour exhaled from his voluntariness; he was not dragged to his sufferings, but suffered more willingly than we had greedily sinned against God. We had conscience checking us in sinning, but Christ had no conscience checking him in suffering; it was his meat and drink to do his Father's will. As God's order makes his sacrifice capable of being satisfactory, so the free willingness of Christ makes it capable of being accepted for us, and applied to us. Involuntary services are rather passions than actions; in them we rather suffer a service than perform it. There was obedience in every preparatory act of Christ, obedience in the last act, in the suffering death; and it was his obedience in suffering, not simply the suffering itself, made it meritorious of his mediatorial glory for us, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him," Phil. ii. 8, 9. namely, because of his "obedience to the death of the cross." His joy in performing, was the incentive of God's joy in valuing, accepting, and rewarding it; God eyed his obedience in the crown he gave him; and it was in

the consideration of his obedience in suffering, that he advanced him to that excellent dignity.

II. That this sacrifice is acceptable to God and efficacious for us, will appear in several propositions.

1. God took pleasure in the designment and expectation of it.

(1.) His eternal delights were in him, not only as his Son, but as a Redeemer. God's delight in Christ, and Christ's rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and delighting in the sons of men, are coupled together, Prov. viii. 30, 31. as if God delighted in him, because he delighted in the redemption of man. Hence God is introduced speaking with a kind of joy of this ransom, "Then is he gracious to him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 24. that is, I have accepted a ransom, and have a price in my hand; as, "I am become rich, I have found me out substance," Hosea xii. 8. that is, I have got wealth enough; so I have here price sufficient, loose the chains of the prisoner. This finding is the same on God's part with acceptation, as finding on Christ's part is the same with obtaining, "Having obtained eternal redemption," Heb. ix. 12. having found It is the speech of God: who else but the Ruler of the world, and the Judge of all flesh, hath power to order the delivery of the captive? It is the exultation of his mercy at the appearance of a sufficient sacrifice for the forlorn sinner, whose soul was drawing near to the grave, and his life to the destroyers. It is the triumph of mercy at the thoughts of it.

(2.) What was the ground of his promises to

him, but his pleasure in him for this undertaking? What else can be the meaning of those words, which the apostle cites to prove the Deity of Christ, "And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son," Heb. i. 5. that God would be always to him a Father, accepting his obedience, and he should always be a Son, offering upon the cross, or pleading upon the throne his sacrifice and sufferings; a father to him as Mediator, to countenance, encourage, accept him, and all his undertakings? This is a promise made to Christ; what need of any promises to Christ, considered only as the Son of God, equal with the Father? It is a promise to Christ as the seed of David; (the place the apostle cites it from, is 2 Sam. vii. 14.) and if to him as the seed of David, it is made to him as Mediator, promising a kingdom to him upon his suffering, and an eternal acceptation of him as an obedient son; the ground whereof was his purging our sins by himself, Heb. i. 3. all the promises of God to Christ, respect not Christ absolutely considered as the Son of God, but in the relation of mediator, sacrifice, ransom for man, for they are all branches issuing upon that first promise to man in paradise, of the Seed of the woman, whose heel was to be bruised. God promiseth to be a Father to Christ, in the same sense that Christ owns him to be his God, and his Father after his resurrection, John xx. 17. which respects God's relation to him as Mediator; for as he is considered absolutely as the Son of God, God could not so properly be said to be his God. The term implies a covenant between them, in pursu-

ance of which, Christ was to be God's servant, and in acceptance of this, God was the God of Christ, and promises to be his Father, manifesting his fatherly and gracious acceptance of his services, as a father doth the obedience of a son; and therefore Christ pleads the righteousness of God for the obtaining the accomplishment of his grace in those that believe in him, as well as the love which God bore to him as Mediator: "O righteous Father," &c. John xvii. 25, 26. Grace was the fountain of the promise, but justice is obliged for the performance.

(3.) Hence it was that he declared his acceptation of him at his entrance into his office, which was at his baptism: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 17. not respecting only his eternal filiation, but the work he was entering into the exercise of, and the preparations to his being a sacrifice: with this work, wherein his Son was to glorify him, was he well pleased; his interposition as a victim for the salvation of many brethren, was grateful to God. The Hebrew word in Isa. xlii. 1. whence this place is cited, is often used to express God's pleasure in, and acceptance of, sacrifices offered to him "according to his will," as Job xxxiii. 26. Mal. i. 8. and here it refers to the whole work of Christ, as the whole work of redemption is called the good pleasure of God, Ephes. i. 5. He confirms here, by his own testimony, what he had declared before by the angels in their hymn: "Good will towards men," Luke ii. 14. So certain was God that this sacrifice would answer all his ends, that he testifies himself well pleased with him, before the full performance of his work.

(4.) Hence it was that God delighted to bruise him, and in the thoughts of it. He foresaw what pleasure he should take in this, as I may say, aromatic sacrifice, after it was bruised and pounded, Isa. liii. 10. Not that God did delight in the act of bruising, considered separately from the ends for which he bruised him, since all acts of justice are his strange works, but with an eye to the issue of it, which was, the glory of his divine perfections, the recovery of lost man, the restoration of the health and soundness of the creation; as the physician delights not in the sharpness of the medicine he administers to the patient, or a surgeon in lancing the body, but as it conduceth to the health of the patient.

(5.) Hence it was that he took pleasure in the representations of it before it was actually offered. Hence the very first service after the promise was probably a sacrifice, as hath been said before, and the chief part of worship in the only church God had in the world for many ages, consisted in sacrifices, the representations of this grand victim in the end of the world. In all those things, which could not upon their own account satisfy God, as not being suited to his justice and wisdom, and not able to expiate the sin of a rational creature, he smelt a sweet savour, as they were images of this sacrifice, whence the greatest and most pleasant fragrancy should be exhaled, Gen. viii. 20.

All this pleasure of God testified before the oblation, was from the certainty of its accomplishment. God knew he "laid help upon one that was mighty," Psa. lxxxix. 19. mighty to please him, and pleasure us. God could not have beforehand rejoiced in that which should have come short of

his expectation; it is inconsistent with the Deity to have such a disappointment; the least failure in the sacrifice would have frustrated his contrivance, and rendered it loathsome to God as the sin of Adam for which he suffered: but it was impossible for God to be disappointed; and impossible for the Redeemer, being God as well as man, to fail in the performance of his part, and thereby God come short of his satisfaction, and the sinner of his security.

2. God had a restoration of his rest, which had been disturbed by the entrance of sin, and therefore this sacrifice was highly acceptable to God. He was God's "servant, in whom his soul delighted," or had a rest, Isa. xlii. 1. Excluding all other things from contributing to the rest or delight of God. God rested in the works of creation as they were shadows of his wisdom, power, and greatness; especially as they were effluxes of his goodness, and answered his glorious ends; for the ground of his resting was a review of the goodness of them according to his own mind and idea. He saw himself and his attributes glittering in the creatures. But the rest of God was disturbed by the invasion sin made upon his rights in the world; and no sooner had he made the world, and was "refreshed," Exod. xxxi. 17. but disorder and confusion, by means of sin, spread itself over that frame; whereupon he cursed the earth, which he had newly made; gave sentence against man, and though it was tempered with the mercy of a gracious promise, yet he left him under some outward penal evils all his days, because of his revolt, and had no rest but in that Seed of the

woman, whose heel was to be bruised by the serpent, that the serpent's head might be shattered and bruised by him; and thereby an end put to that disorder which had entered by the serpent's breath. And therefore all the joy God hath in his church, the best part of his creation, is from this rest or acquiescence in his love, or the object of his love: "He will rest in his love, he will rejoice over thee with singing," Zeph. iii. 17. Hence it is, that the temple, the type of Christ, is called, in regard of those shadows of him, namely, sacrifices daily performed in it, "the house of his glory," Isa. lx. 7. "a glorious high throne," Jer. xvii. 12. "the place of his rest," Isa. lxvi. 1. Could gold and silver, polished stones, and artificial structures be the rest and throne of God? As little as the blood of bulls and goats, could affect him of themselves with a fragrant smell. His sole acquiescence was in the temple of the body of Christ made fit to be a sacrifice, and represented by those types. Such a rest he had in him as a sacrifice, that upon that very account he gave all things into his hands: and as by eternal generation he had communicated to him the perfections of his nature; so, as he was a mediatorial sacrifice, he gave him authority to execute judgment, gave him a kingdom as large as his own, and seemed to vail his own authority, to increase his, and as it were stands behind the curtain, while this our Mordecai, that saved us from death, manages all the concerns of his empire, and all to this end, that "men might honour the Son as they honoured the Father," John v. 22, 23. Such a perfect acquiescence hath God in him, that he will surely

entertain nothing to the prejudice of the honour of Christ in his work. He will not have the best works and sacrifices of men, partners and competitors with him; he will for ever discard all those that have not the same thoughts of him, the same satisfaction and glorious rest in him, according to their measures, as himself hath. No other sacrifice shall be of value with him for the atonement of sin; not a drachm of mercy, not so much as to the quantity of the cooling virtue of a drop of water, can reasonably be expected by those who refresh not themselves with that sacrifice wherein God found so delightful a rest. Such a rest hath God in this sacrifice, that it shall be the matter of the praises of the saints to all eternity in heaven.

3. The highest perfections of God's nature had a peculiar glory from this sacrifice. All his perfections, not discovered before to the sons of men, are glorified punctually, according to his intentions and resolves for their discovery. Not a tittle of his nature which was to be made known to the sons of men, but is unveiled in this sacrifice, to their view, in a greater glory than the creatures were able to exhibit him. The "knowledge of the glory of God shines in the face," or appearance, "of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. that is, all the perfections of his nature are delineated in this saving sacrifice. In which respect some think that, of the "fulness of the Godhead's dwelling in him bodily," Colos. ii. 9. is to be taken, not only that the Deity dwelt in the human nature, but the full discovery of the perfections of the Godhead was in the appearance of Christ in his body, as prepared for a sacrifice, as in a

map and scheme, as clear as could possibly be represented to the view of men. It is in the purchase of our redemption by his blood, that he appears to be the "image of the invisible God," as well as the "first-born" or head of "every creature," Colos. i. 14, 15. the image of those perfections of the Godhead, which otherwise had been utterly invisible to man; the image, not of his will, as the Socinians say, but of his nature. Hence is the glory of the Lord, as well as the salvation of his people, the name and title of Christ, "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed," Isa. xl. 5. Luke ii. 32. His holiness was glorified in the discovery of the hellish filthiness of sin; his justice in the grievous punishment of it; his mercy to his creatures, in the giving the dearest thing he had, a ransom for them. In him he appeared gracious as well as righteous, transcendently merciful in the exercise of the highest justice, Psa. cxvi. 5. both shone clearly in the head of this sacrifice, being tempered for the glory of God, and the good of the creature; the seat of Justice is turned into a throne of grace, puts on the quality of an advocate instead of that of an accuser, uttering absolutions instead of condemnations. Since Justice is propitiated by the death of Christ, it steps in as an agent in the justification of a believer, Rom. iii. 25, 26. Justice, the main attribute to be dreaded by man, was so glorified and pleased by this sacrifice, that this alone would oblige him to the remission of sin, if mercy should not have any suit for itself.

4. Compare this sacrifice with the evil for which he was sacrificed, and which had invaded the rights of God, and the sweet savour of it will appear, as also the efficacy of it.

(1.) This sacrifice was as honourable for God, as our sins had been a dishonour to him. As much glory accrued to him by it, as injury was offered him by our sin. Our sin was the sin of a creature, and the sacrifice was the act of that person by whom God made the world. The sin was the act of his creature-image, the sacrifice was the act of the "express image of his person," Heb. i. 2, 3. Sin was committed by man, and expiated by him who was God. It was not only a rational sacrifice for the sin of a rational creature, but a divine. The sin was an infinite offence in regard of the person against whom it was committed; the price was of an infinite value in regard of the person by whom it was paid; the dignity of the person makes a compensation for the malice of the crime; an infinite person was not more wronged by the transgression, than he is righted by the dignity of the person who made the compensation for it. It is every way proportioned to the infinite guilt of the crimes for which it is offered, and the infinite justice of God which was offended thereby. God had a price of a full value, he was fully repaired in his honour, and we delivered from our chains. In some respect the attributes of God were not so much dishonoured by the sin of Adam, as they were glorified by the death of Christ; Christ glorified by his sacrifice those perfections which were not then discovered nor discoverable to Adam in his innocence, as patience and grace; as well as those which were particularly offended by the revolt of man. This sacrifice fully repairs the honour of God, which nothing else could do. The reason why the damned lie for ever under the weight of his wrath in hell, is, because by all their suffering

they cannot restore that honour to God, which they have robbed him of by their iniquities.

(2.) There was therefore a greater pleasure arose to God from this sacrifice, than noisomeness from our sin. The dignity of the person suffering was equal to the dignity of the person injured, and infinitely exceeding the quality of the person offending. The sin of a creature could never be so filthy, as the blood of the Son of God was holy; and the noisomeness of the first could not equal the sweetness of the latter. The stench of sin was not only balanced and tempered, but overpowered by the sweetness of this sacrifice. Divine justice was not more incensed against the crime, than divine holiness was delighted with the offering. Sin was the sin of the human nature, the sacrifice was of the human nature in union with the divine, and offered up by an "eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14. The apostle in that text alludes to Gen. viii. 21. God smelt so sweet a savour from Noah's sacrifice, the type of this, that he resolves never more to curse the ground, or send a deluge upon the new world, though he knew it would prove as bad as the old; for in the same breath, wherein God's resolution is discovered to us, his sense of the evil of men's imaginations from their youth is declared also. The fragrant odour of the one, was above the noisome scent of the other. Though our consciences are purged from dead works, which do morally pollute us, as the touch of a dead body did ceremonially pollute the Israelite, yet they are but partially purged here to serve the living God. There is not a service we offer, but hath something mixed with it contrary to the holiness of God; yet the evil fumes that steam up with our sacrifices of

duty, are overpowered by the rich perfume of the sacrifice of the Son of God: that when for the foulness of our imperfections we deserve a repulse, yet for the sweetness of his sacrifice we find an acceptation; so much did the merit of his blood overcome the ill scent of our iniquities in the nostrils of God, that he cancels our bonds, which were due to him, and makes new ones of himself to Christ; he frees the creature from the deserved punishment, and obligeth himself to give eternal life to every one that believes in him thus sacrificed, howsoever noisome his sins wherewith he had affronted Heaven before.

(3.) Therefore it is efficacious for man, because so pleasing and sweet to God. Sin did not so much hurt to the transgressor, as this sacrifice procures good to the believer. Sin took away spiritual life, Christ by his sacrifice procures a restoration of it in a fuller communication than before, John x. 10. a richer and more overflowing fountain than before, more abundantly than Adam in innocency, who had it mutable in his own hands, we immutable in the hands of our Head, who is our life; more abundantly than the patriarchs of the old testament, who had it in hope, and we in the full exhibition. A spiritual life more firm than Adam's, ending in an eternal life more durable. Therefore the grace of Christ surmounts the effects of Adam's sin. The apostle discourseth of the abundance of grace above the abundance of sin, Rom. v. 15—17. As Adam's sin barred paradise against him and his posterity, the blood of Christ, as oil to the lock, makes heaven's gates open easily for the re-admission of every believer.

5. His resurrection after his bloody sacrifice, is a clear evidence of the sweetness of its savour with God, and its sufficiency for us. He was not totally swallowed up by divine justice, but surmounted all the strokes of it, and lifted up his head above the waves that surrounded him. The fetters of death had not been unlocked, if his sacrifice had not been satisfactory. The justice of God might as well have discharged him without any sacrifice at all, as discharged him upon an insufficient one. The freedom therefore of the prisoner from his chains, is an evidence of the full satisfaction of the debt, and the completeness of the sacrifice, since it is by that God, whose name hath that letter in it, "By no means to clear the guilty," Exod. xxxiv. 7. that the writ of execution was taken off: "He was taken from prison and from judgment," Isa. liii. 8. By whom? By him who only had authority to release him, who became a God of peace by his sacrifice, before he showed himself a God of power in his resurrection, Heb. xiii. 20. He was appeased as an offended Lawgiver, before he gave a judicial discharge as the supreme Governor, unloosed the chains of death, sent an angel as his officer to unlock the prison doors, the grave, and set him at full liberty, no more to be arrested. There could be in this case no forcible breaking of prison, he being in the hands of the Almighty God, who had as much power to keep him in the chains of death, had his sacrifice been blemished, as he had to free him, when his sacrifice was spotless. Justice therefore is fully satisfied, since the "pains of death are unloosed," Acts ii. 24, 25, &c. for it was not possible he should be holden of them, because the truth of God was engaged that his

"holy One should not see corruption." This raising him was a justification of him; for when he was taken from prison, he was taken from judgment also, that no suits could be brought against him, or any new actions laid upon him, and he was "declared to be the Son of God," Rom. i. 4 and if we take in verse 3, that seed of David also, which was prophesied of; and he was declared to be so with power, not only by the power that raised him, but by the power of the government of the world, wherein he was instated upon his resurrection. For this act of God was a testimony that he had ordained him, and ordained him also "to judge the world," Acts xvii. 31. By this he was acquitted by God, as having done all that he did according to the articles between them. And in that act all his members have an original and fundamental discharge to be sued out in due time in particular upon their faith. It is in this discharge he triumphs, as it was his justification before men and angels: "He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me?" Isa. l. 8. This is the foundation of the apostle's triumphant challenge: "O death, where is thy sting?" 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. Where is sin, that ushered death into the world, and by it stung man to the heart? It is conquered by the resurrection of Christ, which is a clear evidence of the sweetness of this sacrifice to God, and its efficacy for us. Our faith is not in vain, which it had been, according to the apostle, "if he had not risen," 1 Cor. xv. 17. as he died, namely, in the quality of our Surety and Head. Had not the sacrifice been without exception, the devil had been the victor, and Christ his triumph. He would have acquired a stronger power over men by the

least blemish, as he first gained it by Adam's sin Had he not been justified himself, he could never have justified us, nor could the mercies of David have been sure and perpetual without it, Acts xiii. 34. So mightily pleased was God with this sacrifice, that he employed his glorious power to raise him; Justice had no plea to continue him in prison, nor the devil any power to hinder the breaking of his fetters. His sacrifice was his act to propitiate God, his resurrection was God's act to comfort us.

6. The ascension and full exaltation of Christ after his bloody sacrifice, is a full evidence of this doctrine. Since the promises made to Christ are accomplished, which were conditional upon the making his soul an offering for sin, it manifests he is an unexceptionable sacrifice. He had a kingdom promised him, and doth now rule in the majesty of God, Micah v. 4. Had there been the least blemish upon him, he could not have claimed the performance of any one promise, nor had justice been bound to make any good to him. Grace to man made the first promise to Christ in favour of justice, and justice would have hindered the performance of any promise, had it been able to find any exception. This sacrifice of his, in "pouring out his soul to death," is the foundation of all his advancement, Isa. liii. 11, 12. This being the condition on his part, could not but be followed, upon the fulfilling it, with a performance of the promises on God's part. Now Christ went first to heaven in his soul immediately after his oblation to present his sacrifice to God, and receive his judgment about the validity of it; for that day, the day of his sufferings, he was to be in paradise; "after

death the judgment." This was agreeable to the type of him in the anniversary sacrifice upon the day of expiation, when the high priest was to go with the blood into the holy place immediately after the shedding of it, and sprinkle it on the mercy-seat; for after the blood was clotted, it was incapable of being sprinkled. Christ immediately after his death appears in heaven, to receive the acceptation of his Father. This was in his soul, his body then lying in the grave, which the scripture calls not an ascension till his soul and body were re-united, and both went up to heaven together. By this first entrance into heaven, Christ obtained eternal redemption for us. Had not this judgment passed from God, of the prevalency of his sacrifice, God had never sent an angel to unlock the grave, nor a cloud as a chariot to carry him up to heaven. This supposeth his sacrifice on earth to be already ratified in heaven. By this ascension he was again declared, as well as by his resurrection, to be without sin, without any need of repeating his sacrifice, Heb. ix. 28. His triumphant entrance into heaven assures us, that his sacrifice was admitted into the bosom of God with infinite delight and pleasure. He could not have had a glory, had he not punctually observed his order. Triumph doth not precede, but follow a victory. His going to the Father was a full conviction of the righteousness of his person, and his punctual discharge of his office; and the chief topic whereby the Spirit should argue men into a compliance with him, John xvi. 9, 10. is, because he is gone to the Father. Heaven had been no place for a blemished and imperfect offering. The angels

had not been commanded to be his adorers but rather with their flaming swords have chased him out of heaven; he could as little have continued there with a spot, as Adam in paradise after his transgression. No gift could have been poured out upon the sons of men. The Holy Spirit could never have been the purchase of an unaccepted sacrifice. He could not have been invested with a power to exercise any office in heaven, if he had not executed what he had undertaken upon earth; he could not have lived to apply his sacrifice to us, if he had not been accepted in his offering himself a sacrifice for us. But, since he sits at the right hand of God, it is an infallible token of God's absolute rest in him, and his own rest from any further labour; it is an argument of special favour and dearness. God hath given him all power in heaven and earth, ordered all the angels to worship him, and not only to give him a simple adoration, but to be at his command, his ministers and attendants in his kingdom; he subjected his whole court to him and his service; he bestowed upon him all the honour that was possible to be given him as Mediator, out of the complacency he had in him as a sacrifice. It was upon the account that "he purged our sins" by himself, that he "sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high," and had all that dignity conferred upon him which is afterwards named, Heb. i. 3. The whole prophecy of it is called "a song of loves," Psa. xlv. title. So highly pleasing it is to God, that he will not cease shooting his arrows, till he hath put every enemy under his feet, that doth not agree with him in his pleasure and delight in Christ,

Psa. cx. 1. As therefore he is entered into heaven, sat down at the right hand of God, and has maintained the plea of his sacrifice for so many hundred years since he first entered his suit, it is a proof that the pleading his death, and the sight of his sacrificed body, is not wearisome and distasteful to God. It is not like a carcase that he desires to be buried out of his sight. He joyfully hears the voice of his blood sounding in his ears to this moment. Well therefore might the apostle upon this account make so great a challenge to all: "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 33, 34. Christ by his death, appeased the wrath of God; by his resurrection, he was acquitted by the justice of God; by his ascension, he took possession of his regal throne; by his sitting at the right-hand of God, he prevalently pleads his sacrifice for the ends for which it was offered, and by his Spirit applies his blood to them that believe in him.

7. The admirable virtue of this sacrifice, evidenceth the sweetness of it in the account of God. It had a virtue antecedent to the oblation of it, and after the oblation it hath a perpetual virtue.

(1.) It had a virtue antecedent to the oblation of it. God upon the foresight of this sacrifice to be made in due time, did dispense his pardon to those that rested upon this future sacrifice, and did not stay till the satisfaction should be made for the injury committed, but imparted it to men, that hoped in the merit of the sacrifice before the oblation of it, and released the captive upon the single bond of Christ, before the actual

payment of the ransom. Upon his promise to be a sacrifice, believers under the old testament were saved by the merit of it, as well as those under the new. Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and was justified by faith in him. When he appeared, his design was to "put away sin," Heb. ix. 25, 26. what sin? not only sins committed while he was in the flesh, or sins committed after his ascension, but sins before, even those transgressions which the legal sacrifices from the time of their first institution were unable to expiate; such sins, which the high priest entering into the holy place every year with the blood of animals, was not able to wipe off, and to "make that perfect which the law could not," Heb. vii. 19. and redeem from the "transgression under the first testament," Heb. ix. 15. As a head appointed by God, he saved men before his coming, as Adam the first head ruined men before their birth. It is not more efficacious now, nor will be to eternity, than it was before; for he is the same in point of virtue yesterday, in the ages past, as he is to-day, at present, and will be in ages "to come," Heb. xiii. 8. Whoever were accepted by God in their persons and services, were accepted upon the account of the first-born or head of every creature; as in him all the elect were chosen, so in him they were all accepted, Eph. i. 4, 6. Faith was from the first ages of the world; the proper object of faith is God in the Redeemer, and he was not considered by the patriarchs, but in that quality, in all their sacrifices, since he had changed the government after the fall, from God as Creator, to God as Redeemer; and

therefore as all his acts of government respected the Redeemer and the redemption, so all the services of men were to respect the Redeemer promised. What God did to them, was in the name of Christ, the angel of his covenant; and what they offered to God, was with an eye to the promised Seed, which is the same thing with our doing all things in the name of Christ, the circumstance of time only being altered; what was future then being changed into time past now. The ground of this was the agreement between God and Christ for the performance of this oblation. When bonds are agreed on, and time given for the payment of the debt, the prisoner hath his liberty till that revolution of time. Now, not only the thing to be done, but the time when it was to be done, was settled between them, called therefore a due time, or a stated opportunity, Rom. v. 6. and the fulness of time; and till that time there was to be a relaxation or pretermission, a not charging the debt upon them, which is the word used by the apostle: "For the remission of sins that are past," Rom. iii. 25. Had not this sacrifice had a virtue antecedent to the oblation of it, Christ himself, in the days of his flesh, could not well have uttered those words so often, "Thy faith hath saved thee," before he had bowed his head upon the cross. The removal of sin, the bar to communion with God, upon the credit of a future sacrifice, is an undeniable evidence now sweet the expectation of it was to God; and therefore sweet must the actual immolation of it needs be.

(2.) After the oblation it hath a perpetual virtue. If the virtue of it, before it was offered, reached to

the first ages of the world, as far as Adam and Abel, it will continue in as excellent a force to the last believer, that shall close up the number of the elect at the end of the world. If the blood of Abel is so efficacious as to procure a perpetual vengeance upon Cain, shall not the blood of that person, by whom God created the world, be more efficacious to procure a perpetual blessing from the grace of God, to which he is more inclined than to acts of vengeance? Though this sacrifice was but once offered, yet it works, in regard of its virtue, perpetually as a moral cause. As, the act of sin ceasing, the guilt and power of sin remains binding over to punishment, so, though the act of Christ's offering himself ceased, yet the virtue of it is durable. The blood of this redeeming victim, is intimated to be an incorruptible blood: "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ," 1 Peter i. 18, 19. precious because incorruptible; the opposition testifies it, though it be not the same expression; precious blood is opposed to corruptible things. As his body, so likewise his blood, and the efficacy of his sacrifice, was not to see corruption; his blood is like the rod of Aaron, always flourishing in the holy of holies before the mercy-seat. Aaron's rod flourished after Aaron's death, the sacrifice of Christ is always fresh rising before the throne of God, producing the fruits it merited, and the grace we want. This blood is called "a new and living way," as if it were just now shed, or had been sprinkled upon us as soon as it streamed out of his body. Since he is a Priest for ever, the virtue of his death abides for ever; he could not be a Priest for ever without an everlasting sacrifice,

for priest and sacrifice are relatives. If he be a priest for ever, he is a sacrifice for ever; the same moment that the virtue of the latter ceaseth, the honour of the former would shrink away: but that is "unchangeable," Heb. vii. 24. His kingdom cannot be shaken; his sacrifice therefore, which was the foundation of his kingdom, cannot be wasted; he must cease sitting upon his throne, fall from being the Father's darling at his right hand, if the virtue of his merit, and the efficacy of his blood, should cease producing the true fruits of it among his people. Though the oblation was but once, yet the presentation is perpetual; he pleads upon his throne what he offered upon the cross. If it were a wasted thing, it were not worthy of the plea of so great a person as the Redeemer, nor worthy to be pleaded before so great a person as the Judge of all the world. He is, in regard of the continued virtue, not said to have been, but to be, our propitiation: "He is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John ii. 2. he *is*, not *has been*, he *is now* sitting in heaven: he was a propitiation on earth in his offering, he is a propitiation in heaven in the presentation of that offering. While his plea is heard, his death is accepted, for his plea is only the voice of his blood, and the fumes of his sacrifice. If the gospel must be preached to the end of the world, the virtue of his sacrifice, upon which the efficacy of the gospel depends, shall endure as long as the world endures. This perpetual virtue was typified by the ashes of the red heifer burnt without the camp, which were reserved for purifying from legal uncleanness, Numb. xix. 9. As the power of the devil shall never be able to pull him out of his throne, so the power of sin shall never

be so prevalent as to weaken the virtue of his blood; as long as he remains in a state of life, his blood will have its efficacy, because it is the blood of "the everlasting covenant," Heb. xiii. 20. What greater evidence can there be of the gratefulness of it to God, than its virtue reaching to the most distant ages of the world, and running through all the revolutions of time?

8. It is so acceptable to God, that it is a sufficient sacrifice for all, if all would accept of it, and by a fixed faith plead it. It is sufficient for the salvation of all sinners, and the expiation of all sins. The wrath of God was so fully appeased by it, his justice so fully satisfied, that there is no bar to a re-admission into his favour, and the enjoyment of the privileges purchased by it, but man's unbelief. The blood of Christ is a stream, whereof all men may drink; an ocean, wherein all men may bathe. It wants not value to remove our sins, if we want not faith to embrace and plead it. As no sickness was strong enough against the battery of his powerful word when he was in the world; so no guilt is strong enough against the power of his blood, if the terms upon which it is offered by God, be accepted by us. It is absolutely sufficient in itself, so that if every son of Adam, from Adam himself to the last man that shall issue from him by natural descent, should by faith sue out the benefit of it, it would be conferred upon them. God hath no need to stretch his wisdom, to contrive another price, nor Christ any need to re-assume the form of a servant, to act the part of a bloody sacrifice any more. If any perished by the biting of the fiery serpent, it was not for want of a remedy in God's

institution, but from wilfulness in themselves. The antitype answers to the type, and wants no more a sufficiency to procure a spiritual good, than that to effect the cure of the body. He is therefore called "the Saviour of the world," 1 John iv. 14. And when the apostle upon the citation of that in the prophet, that "whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed;" concludes, that there is "no difference between Jew and Gentile," but that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved," Rom. x. 1 , 13. by the same reason it may be concluded, that there is no difference between this and that man, if they believe: what is promised to one believer, as a believer, is promised to all the world upon the same condition. And when the apostle saith, verse 9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe with thy heart, thou shalt be saved;" he speaks to every man that shall hear that sentence. If any man believe, this sacrifice is sufficient for his salvation; as Adam's disobedience was sufficient to ruin all his posterity descending from him by natural generation; so is this sacrifice sufficient to save all that are in Christ by a spiritual implantation. The apostle's comparison would not else be valid: "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," Rom. v. 18. And if all men in the world were united to him by faith, there could not be any more required of Christ for their salvation than what he hath already acted; for it is a sacrifice of infinite value, and infinite knows no limits.

Since it was sufficient to satisfy an infinite justice, it is sufficient to save an inexpressible number; and the virtue of it in saving one, argues a virtue in it to save all upon the same condition. Who will question the ability of an almighty power to raise all men from death to life, that hath raised one man from death to life by the speaking of a word? If men therefore perish, it is not for want of value, or virtue, or acceptableness in this sacrifice, but for want of answering the terms upon which the enjoyment of the benefits of it is proposed. If a man will shut his eyes against the light of the sun, it argues an obstinacy in the person, not any defect in the sun itself.

9. The effects of this sacrifice show the acceptableness of it to God. As the effect of Adam's disobedience demonstrates the blackness and strength of his sin, so the fruit of this sacrifice evidenceth the efficacy of it. Had it not been sweet to God, we had still been in our sins. He was to perfect his people, which had been impossible, had he not been perfect himself in his sufferings; if he hath "perfected for ever them that are sanctified," then that sacrifice whereby he did perfect them is fully complete, Heb. x. 14.

(1.) Remission of sin. Our lives by our rebellion were a debt to the violated law; when we transgressed the precept, we incurred the penalty: this debt is discharged to believers by Christ's offering his soul in our stead, a sacrifice for sin, a rescue for our souls. "He took away sin as the Lamb of God," John i. 29. As a sacrificed lamb, for the analogy relates not to a lamb as a creature, but a lamb as a sacrifice. He took away the sin of the world, the guilt of sin, the curse of God,

whatsoever belongs to the eternal wages of sin, he transferred upon himself. There is a perpetual virtue in its nature: "He took;" as when we say a drug purges, we signify not only the act, but the natural quality of it. The apostle concludes the efficacy of this oblation from God's remembering sin no more: "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more; now where remission of those is, there is no more offering for sin," Heb. x. 16—18. The completeness of the fruit discovers the judgment of God, for the completeness of the merit upon which it is founded. He himself therefore after his resurrection gives his apostle commission to publish this as the fruit of his death, to let men know, that the way to heaven in the removal of the bar, was secured by the blood of Jesus, John xx. 22, 23. Luke xxiv. 47. All the sacrifices wherein there was a daily remembrance of sin, were abrogated as useless after this offering, which surmounted the efficacy of all the legal ones put together. They expiated ceremonial uncleanness, and the pollution of the body; this, moral iniquities and the filth of the soul, Heb. ix. 13, 14. the apostle instanceth in the most solemn offering, that of the red heifer, supposed to be of a more durable efficacy than the daily offerings, since the ashes of it were reserved for a "purification for sin," Numb. xix. 9. But this, much more the rest, were exceeded by this offering that purged the conscience from those dead works, that bound the soul over to eternal death. And indeed the ceremonial act of the high-priest in sprinkling the blood of the heifer directly "before the tabernacle," verse 4, intimated that the efficacy of it was to be derived from the flesh and blood of Christ typified by that

structure. By this we gain a plenary indulgence, so as to have "no more conscience of sin," Heb. x. 2. Not that there is no more sin in believers, or no more sense of sin, but no more accusations and charges of sin before God, or despairing servile thoughts for sin in their own consciences. For in his blood "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins," Eph. i. 7. Upon which account a challenge is made by the apostle to all the believer's adversaries, to bring an effectual charge against them, Rom. viii. 33, 34. It frees us not from one or two sins, but vast numbers of them: "The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7. So that all the powers of hell can never lay the load upon them again; for this saves to the uttermost, covers their iniquities, and blots them out as a thick cloud. "Death is swallowed up in victory," the destruction and condemnation by sin: "O death, where is thy sting?" that is, Where is sin? that is, the sting of death, 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. And indeed so acceptable to God was the first undertaking of our Saviour, that God promised him this as the fruit of his suffering, that his labour should not be in vain, that he should see his seed, that by his knowledge he should justify many, when he "bore their iniquities," Isa. liii. 11. And therefore when the apostle saith, the old man is crucified with Christ, he understands that the destruction of the body of death, and the remission of all the extravagancies of it, is purchased by Christ at the hands of God, Rom. vi. 6. And all the sense we have of remission, from any ordinance, especially by that of the supper, is not from the ordinance itself, or the remembrance of this sacrifice; but from the perpetual and prevailing efficacy of

it with God to this day. The removal of so great a weight from the soul, which we were unable to bear, so great a curse which we were unable to suffer, shows the high acceptableness of it with God.

(2.) The confirmation of the covenant. After sin had stept into the world, and invaded the rights of God, the first covenant became utterly unprofitable for the relief of man. God makes a new one, which was not signified to be valid to any without sacrifice. It is not unlikely that the first declaration of it to Adam, in the promise of the Seed, was accompanied with the sacrifices of beasts; both to show to him a token of that punishment he had merited at the hands of justice; and in what a bloody way his recovery was to be accomplished. The repetition of it to Abraham was confirmed by sacrifices, Gen. xv. 17, 18. And the solemn covenant between God and the Israelites was confirmed by sacrifices, and the blood of them called by Moses, "the blood of the covenant," Exod. xxiv. 5—8. that is, a type of that blood which shall be shed for the confirmation of that blessed covenant whereby the soul shall be purified from sin. And by the institution of God this seems to be essential to a covenant with God: "My saints, that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice," Psalm l. 5. And this custom was used by the heathens in their leagues and solemn contracts between nations, and in covenants between their gods and them, which descended to them probably by tradition from the first parents, though they had lost the true intent of that tradition. All this respected the confirmation of the covenant of grace (succeeding in the room of

that violated covenant of works) by the blood of the promised Seed, whereby man was to be repaired, and the devil defeated. Hence is God so mightily affected with the engagement of Christ to be our surety, that he presently establisheth the covenant of being their God, and making them his people: "Who is this that hath engaged his heart to approach to me, saith the Lord? Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God," Jer. xxx. 21, 22. That is the immediate issue of this engagement. To this purpose was he given to be a witness of the everlasting covenant," Isa. lv. 3, 4. And to this his sacrifice had an immediate respect, whence the blood that merits the striking off the chains of the prisoners, and taking away the bars, is called the "blood of the covenant," Zech. ix. 11. And Christ, in the institution of the supper, Luke xxii. 20. calls it the "new testament in his blood," that is, the true blood shed for the ratification of the covenant, which was only typified by the blood of all former sacrifices. And "for the remission of sins;" this only is mentioned, though other benefits besides this flowed from the covenant, because as sin was the foundation of all evil, so pardon of sin is the fountain of all good. Had other blessings been merited without this, a bar had been put to our enjoyment of them, by the want of this. Upon this first link all other blessings in the chain of happiness depend. All the promises of God, which are branches of this federal engagement, are yea and amen in Christ, of an infallible certainty. He himself is "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness," Rev. iii. 4. And to this purpose is the sacrament of the

supper appointed, being the perpetual representation of this sacrifice, wherein God shows himself resolved to stand firm in the covenant, which was confirmed by the blood of the cross, and make good to a believer all the branches of it. This manifests it to be highly acceptable to God, since the covenant made just after the unprofitableness of the old, is upon the account of this sacrifice ratified by God (as the sure mercies of David) in all the parts of it, to all the indigencies and highest satisfaction of every believer.

(3.) Restoration of peace, and intercourse with God. Man was upon the terms of enmity with God, hating him, and being hated by him. God hates men, not as creatures, but as sinners. Man hates God, not as God, but as Sovereign and Judge. Man turned off God from being his Lord; God turned off man from being his favourite. Therefore Christ, in respect of this sacrifice, is called our propitiation, 1 John ii. 2. and Rom. iii. 25. alluding both to the sacrifices and the place of the sprinkling the blood. As "He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him," Isaiah liii. 5. And though he was reconciling us all his life, yet it is principally ascribed to his sacrifice in his death, Col. i. 21, 22. All that Christ did in his life, had not been available for us, had he not added the top-stone in the shedding his blood: and therefore in the Creed there is a transition and leap from his birth to his death, all intermediate actions of his life being omitted, because that was the great work whereby it was finished. Access to God was barred up, till the way was opened by the blessed "Son of God," Heb. x. 19, 20

So much is God pleased with it, that his majesty condescends to the lowest step, to solicit his apostate creatures; and miserable man is admitted to importune God, not only with hopes, but assurance of his favour, and a happy success upon the account of this expiatory sacrifice. God hath laid aside the rigours of his justice, to beseech us with the bowels of his mercy; and tore down the partition-wall that hindered his deplorable creature from an access to him, and hereby given us a full evidence what an inestimable fragrancy ascended from this sacrifice before him, since he did not only blot our sins out of the records of his justice, but restored us to his forfeited favour, and conferred upon us the privilege of children, and conversed with man as an object of his love, who before had rendered himself the mark of his wrath.

(4.) The mission of the Spirit. God first sent Christ to be an acceptable sacrifice to him, and, to testify his high valuation of it, sent the Spirit in his name, or upon his account, to be an abiding Comforter to us. Had not the sin which first drove the Spirit out of the world, been expiated according to the mind and will of God, he had not revisited the world, but left it in its original darkness. His first mission, and all his consequent operations, are the fruits of this sacrifice. Though he was sent by the Father, yet sent "in the name of the Son," John xiv. 26. as a fruit of God's acceptation of him. His name had been of no prevalence for so great a gift, had not his death been first of a grateful savour with the Father. Had he not gone away, the Comforter could not have come to us, John xvi. 7. which refers not only to

nis ascension, but to his passion; and had he gone, and his death been disapproved of, the Spirit had staid in heaven. Nor would the Spirit have been employed to bring things to our remembrance, which were not worth our remembrance to our comfort, if they had not been first worthy of his Father's acceptation. He was "not to speak of himself," John xvi. 13. that is, he was not to publish a new doctrine, but impress what Christ as a Prophet had taught, and what Christ as a Priest had acted. He would not have been sent to act upon a weak foundation, and to propagate that which had not exactly answered the will and design of God. He was to glorify Christ, verse 14. that is, to declare the efficacy of his death. Christ had not been a fit subject to be glorified in the world, had he not, in the administration of his office, glorified God, and been glorious in his eyes. And since he is an abiding Spirit, his perpetual inhabitation manifests the perpetual favour of this sacrifice; for, since the first acceptation of it was the cause of his coming, the perpetual fragrancy of it must be the ground of his abiding. He could no more abide, if there were an interruption of its sweetness, than he could first have come, had there been a defect of sweetness in it. This sacrifice did not only procure the coming of the Spirit, but his coming, with the most glorious things in the possession of God: "All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, he shall take of mine, and show it unto you," John xvi. 15. All things that the Father hath: the greatness of the Comforter, the fulness of the treasure, and his perpetual abiding with these rich gifts, are full evidences how much God is pleased with this offering.

As God could not testify his good will to man in a higher manner than sending his Son to be a sacrifice for him, so he could not in a higher manner testify his delight in that sacrifice, than to send so great a person as the Holy Ghost to be a solicitor to men to accept of it, and a Comforter to those who believe in it, the third person in the blessed Trinity, to preserve the honour of the oblation of the second. God would never have been at the expense of so great a gift to keep up the credit of a person and sacrifice wherein he had no pleasure.

(5.) The acceptance of our persons and services. His delight in this sacrifice is the ground of the the acceptation of every person accepted by him: it is in the Beloved that every one is accepted, Eph. i. 6. Not beloved simply as his Son, the second person in the glorious Trinity, but beloved as a sacrifice; for he was beloved as he was a medium for the praise of the glory of the grace of God, which was not as he was a Son by eternal generation, but as he assumed our nature by his incarnation, and offered it to God by his passion. The Trinity had been blessed, if man had not been created; and had been blessed, if revolted man had not been redeemed, and not a spark of grace shot out upon the world. Therefore in the following verse, this, as well as the other parts of redemption, is ascribed to his blood. Had not Christ been first accepted as an oblation of infinite value, neither the persons nor services of men, abounding with guilt and filth, could have been worthy of the notice and entertainment of God. Our acceptation is the fruit of the acceptation of the offering Christ made of himself. The pleasure God takes in his obedience to death, makes believers as his mem-

bers, and their services as sprinkled with his blood, delightful to God; upon which account, the last time, wherein this victim was to be offered, is called "the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God," Isaiah lxi. 2. an acceptable time, when it was the day of vengeance upon sin in the suffering of the sinner's Surety.

(6.) The joys and peace of conscience. By his bonds he procured our liberty, by his condemnation our absolution, and tasted of the vengeance of God, to fill us with the delights of the Spirit. As God had a rest in his acceptation of it, so he gives us a joy and peace in our believing it, which is the acceptation on our parts, answering to the acceptation on God's part, Rom. xv. 13. This is accompanied with a repose to the conscience, a silencing our fears, and a filling with "a joy unspeakable, and full of glory." These gifts God doth most plentifully distribute, when we are deepest in sufferings for the acknowledgment and approbation of this sacrifice; it is then Stephen shall see the heavens opened, and behold Christ at the right hand of God, have a sense how highly God values that in heaven, which wicked men reproach, and believers suffer for on earth, Acts vii. 55. then it is that a "Spirit of glory and of God rests upon them," 1 Pet. iv. 14. God eats not his morsels alone; he impresseth a joy in the hearts of his people, when they are either publicly witnessing to this blood, or privately acting faith in it, or celebrating the memorials of it: when we eat our spiritual meat with singleness of heart," God doth accompany it with "gladness," Acts ii. 46. Every beam of paradise,

darting into the heart at such seasons, is a token of its sweet savour with God, and an assurance of God's valuing us, for valuing that which is so much the object of his delight. Man only stands in a posture for such spiritual viands, when he is in the exercise of an estimation of Christ in imitation of that esteem God hath of him; this is the best savour to God, next to that of the oblation of his Son.

(7.) Bestowing of the glory of heaven upon this account. The restoring men to that eternal salvation they had lost, is a certain proof of the strength of this sacrifice. As soon as Christ was "made perfect by suffering, he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him," Heb. v. 9. Nothing can be a higher demonstration to the sense of the creature, of God's esteem of this victim, than his admission of poor creatures to reside with him, for ever to behold and enjoy his glory. By this we have liberty to enter into the holy place, not only a license or bare permission, but a right of purchase, whence it is called a "purchased possession," Eph. i. 14. a right of donation as a fruit of his delight in Christ, "the gift of God through Jesus Christ," Rom. vi. 23. Justice, that barred heaven, is satisfied; and God consented to a preparation of mansions in paradise, instead of dungeons in hell, that his enemies might become the heirs of his kingdom. So agreeable to God is the odour of this sacrifice, that God is not only content to free us from the hell we had merited, but he would also open for us the heaven we had forfeited, that we might be partakers of the glory and kingdom of his Son; not only deliver us, but perfect us: not only

cross our debts that entitled us to prison, but impute a righteousness to entitle us to glory; stop the mouth of hell, and open the gates of heaven. Hence we are said to be "raised together with Christ," namely, by the glory of the Father, as he was, to "sit in heavenly places with Christ," by the donation of the Father, as he did, Ephes. ii. 5, 6. the meaning of which is, that by those acts of raising up and exalting to glory his sacrificed Son, he hath sealed to every believer the perfection of regeneration in a possession of glory for ever. The satisfaction God hath in the value of this offering, cannot give forth itself in fuller expressions, than in our salvation by the virtue of it, every thing formidable and burdensome being removed, every thing great and glorious bestowed, justice with all its vengeance appeased, the law with all its retinue of curses silenced, sin with all its demerits expiated, the covenant with all its benefits ratified, peace with all its blessings restored, the Spirit with all its treasures bestowed; our services purified from their filth, our consciences pacified from their fears, whatsoever is grievous abrogated, the veil of the temple, with all the heavy weight of ceremonies, rent in twain; hell quenched, and heaven prepared and furnished for all who imitate God in his valuation of this sacrifice.

Quest. What was it that rendered this sacrifice acceptable to God, and efficacious for us?

Ans. 1. The dignity of his person. That which is inferior, cannot be the rest and satisfaction of a superior nature; nothing but infinite therefore can be the rest and satisfaction of an infinite Being. The holiness and goodness of any, or of all

creatures, could not render a sacrifice worthy of the acceptance of God. The holiness of a creature was not infinite to answer the infinite evil of sin, and suit the infinite holiness of God, any more than the weakness of a creature could have rendered him strong enough to endure the strokes of an infinite justice. Since the heavens are not pure in the sight of God, and the angels, if compared with him, are not free from vanity, Job xv. 15. iv. 18. it is necessary that he in whom God doth rest, should excel, not only the dignity and perfections of angels, but the condition of any finite being. If the holy angels cannot be the rest of God, because of their natural mutability abstracted from the establishing grace of God, much less can man, who is filthy, and drinks iniquity like water; for whatsoever dignity might be considered in his person to commend the sacrifice, might be considered also in his crime, to aggravate the guilt. But the dignity of this person was solely to be regarded in the offering, because he had no crime to be magnified by the consideration of it, being offered, not for any sin of his own, but for the sins of others. This sacrifice was of infinite value, and therefore worthy of the acceptance of an infinite nature; his person was of as great a dignity as the Father's, to whom he was offered. Though there be a distinction of order between the three Persons, yet not of dignity; he had no peer but God, for he was "equal with him," had equalities of perfections with God, was every way equal to the party offended, so that he is called God's fellow, one of the same nature with him; a man as stricken by the sword, yet his fellow as considered in his divine nature, Zech. xiii. 7. meant of Christ, part of the

verse being applied by Christ to himself, Matt. xxvi. 31. his fellow, though man, yet not as man · in whom the "fulness of the Godhead dwelt," Colos. ii. 9. not typically as in the sanctuary and most holy place, nor mystically as in believers, but personally, as his flesh was the proper flesh of the second person. Hence that name which is peculiar to the essence of God is ascribed to him: "He shall be called the Lord, our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. Jehovah, the incommunicable name of God, he, that righteous Branch whom Jehovah should raise up, verse 5. shall be called Jehovah; he that is raised up is Jehovah, as well as he that raised him; the glorious name of God would not have been ascribed to a simple man. He was in the form of God, before he took upon him the form of a servant, and laid not aside the form of God, when he made himself of no reputation, and in that disreputed state became obedient to the death of the cross; upon this account, his sacrifice is more worthy of acceptance than the sacrifice of all creatures. As the mediation of a prince is far more noble than that of a peasant, and the head of a king of greater value than that of a subject; the person of one David was more worth than ten thousand of the common Israelites, 2 Sam. xviii. 3. And as the person of Christ, so the sufferings of that person, are of more worth than the souls of all men, and their bodies cast into the scale.

The dignity of Christ thus appearing, let us see how his sufferings are dignified by the greatness of his person.

(1.) His sufferings were partly finite, partly infinite. They were finite, in regard of the time of duration; finite in regard of the immediate subject

wherein he suffered, his human nature; which being a creature, could no more become infinite, than it could become omnipotent, omniscient, or eternal. But in regard of the person who suffered, the sufferings were infinite; the Deity being in conjunction with the humanity. That which is finite in regard of time, and in regard of the subject, may be infinite in regard of the object. As the sin of a short minute, and the sin of a finite creature, in regard both of the time when it is committed, and the person guilty of it, is finite; but in regard of the object, God, whose glory is eclipsed, it is an infinite evil. As the greatness of an offence is to be measured by the greatness of the person whose honour is invaded: as the striking a king is capital, when the striking an ordinary man falls under a small pecuniary fine; so the value of a satisfaction is to be measured by the excellency of the person satisfying. As therefore an infinite sin deserves an infinite punishment, because it is committed against an infinite God; so the sacrifice of Christ deserves an infinite acceptation, because it is offered by an infinite person. The subject sacrificed, makes the sacrifice infinitely grateful; as well as the person offended, renders the injury infinitely heinous. This was not the sacrifice of a man, or an angel; but of the head of the creation, "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3. By which, his sufferings were advanced into infinity, and the merit of them an infinite odour before God. There could not have been so much honour rendered to God by the obedience of a mere creature, as there was injury offered him by the transgression of the sinner.

Though our sins were not infinite in number, because no number can increase so vastly as to be actually infinite, since it is composed of units added to one another; yet had they been far less, they had needed an infinite virtue in the sacrifice, by reason of the infiniteness of their guilt, because the majesty of God and his perfections are infinite, which are dishonoured by sin. Such a sacrifice this is, which hath an infinite virtue of expiating.

(2.) This infiniteness ariseth from the near and strait union of the divine with the human nature. It was not the simple offering a sacrifice by the Son of God, which was so acceptable. Had the Son of God offered any thing else, though the offerer had been infinite, yet the offering had been finite, because not allied to, and in conjunction with, the person offering. It was infinitely valuable, not because himself was the offerer, but because himself was the offering, offering that which was in conjunction with his deity. "Purged by himself," Hebrews i. 3. "Offered himself up through the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14. By the personal union, the dignity was conferred upon the sufferings of his human nature. If you will say, a sacrifice had been infinite, only because it was offered by an infinite person; you may as well call the meanest worm in the world infinite, because it was made by an infinite God, and in an infinite manner of operation. The dignity therefore ariseth from the unity of the same infinite person, in whom the two natures were united; so all the actions of Christ, as Mediator, received their value from his person. And by reason of the unity of his

person, that which was the act of one nature, is attributed to the other: as when it is said, "the Son of man came down from heaven," John iii. 13. that is, that person who was man, though his human nature had not been in heaven: and when his blood is called, "the blood of the Son of God," 1 John i. 7. and "the blood of God;" it was not the blood of the Godhead, but of that person who was God.

(3.) In regard of this near conjunction, the godhead of Christ did influence every mediatorial action. (I do not take in all the actions of the human nature, that had no respect to his mediation, any more than as they did refer to the sustentation of his human nature, as his eating, drinking, sleeping, &c.) This value was as inseparable from his sufferings, as the divine nature was inseparable from the human. In all that he did, he was the Son of God; as much upon the cross, as before his descent from heaven; in the lowest pitch of his humiliation, as well as in his highest state of exaltation; the Son of God as much, when at his death he said, "It is finished," as after his resurrection, when he said, "All power is given to me." The man against whom the sword did awake, was "God's fellow," when he felt the piercing edge of it, Zech. xiii. 7. Indeed, he laid aside aside the manifestation of his glory, but could not lay aside his glory; for then he might lay aside his eternity, omnipotency, his deity, and cease from being God, which is utterly impossible. He was always the same, and, as his years, so neither did his glory fail, Heb. i. 12. In all his sufferings he retained the relation and reality of the Son of God, the union

of his natures remained firm in all his passions, and therefore the efficacy of the deity mingled itself with every groan in his agony, every pang and cry upon the cross, as well as with the blood which was shed: and as his blood was the "blood of God," Acts xx. 28. so his groans were the groans of God, his pangs were the pangs of God, and were therefore subjectively infinite in value; yet did not every groan and pang procure our redemption by itself, upon the account of the infiniteness of its value in being the groans of God, because they without death did not answer the tenor of the law, nor was the curse of the law, which he was designed to endure, accomplished in any act of suffering, without shedding of blood, and that to death: "Without shedding of blood, there is no remission," Heb. ix. 22. for as there was a necessity of the conjunction of the divine nature with the human, to make his sufferings infinite; so there was a necessity of a full conformity to the threatening of the law, and his Father's order, to make them efficacious for the honour of God, and redemption of the creature. The sum is this: As what the divine nature acted, was wrought instrumentally by the human; so what the human nature acted or suffered, was made efficacious, and dignified, by the divine.

(4.) In this respect God, his deity, may be accounted as it were his suffering, or as if he suffered. It was not necessary his deity should suffer to make the sacrifice infinite, and indeed it was impossible. The divine nature is as impassible as it is immutable; yet in regard of the strait union of the two natures, his mediatorial actions and sufferings, being the

actions and sufferings of the person, may be counted as the sufferings of the deity itself in a moral way, and by legal estimation. As sin is called *Deicidum*, not that it is so, or can be so physically, but in a moral way, in men's doing that which puts on the nature of destroying God, were it in the power of the sinner, or possible in itself; or as sin in scripture is called a wearying of God, when omnipotency cannot be tired, and if God were tired, he were not omnipotent: but they carry themselves so towards God, as would weary the most patient man in the world; and it is esteemed by God a wearying of him. As Christ was not guilty of sin but in a juridical manner, by reason of his voluntary subjection to punishment in the stead of the sinner; so neither could the divine nature suffer but by way of estimation, as the person of the Son of God did voluntarily assume the human nature wherein he was to suffer. As Christ hung upon the cross as if he were guilty, so the divine nature in conjunction with it might be esteemed to suffer, as if it were passible; the Deity did suffer in an eclipse of its glory, and vailing the manifestation of it. Hence, as he had a body, his blood was the blood of a man, yet because it was the blood of his person, it was the "blood of the Son of God," 1 John i. 7. and the "blood of God," Acts xx. 28. The immediate subject suffering was the human nature, but the person suffering was "the Lord of glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8. In that state and condition he offered up himself, which the apostle signifies: "He offered up himself through the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14. "Through" imports not only that the divine nature of Christ did offer the sacrifice, but it seems to have

the same sense as the same word: "The father of them that believe, though they be not circumcised," Rom. iv. 11. The father of them that believe through uncircumcision, that is, in an uncircumcised state, or "who by the letter and circumcision do transgress the law," Rom. ii. 27. not that circumcision was the cause of the one's faith, or uncircumcision the cause of the other's sin; but that the one believed, and the other transgressed, in those several states. So Christ here, when he offered himself, was not in the condition of a mere man, but had a divine and eternal nature in the offering himself up unto God. It is from this state and condition of his in his suffering, that the apostle draws an argument for the value of his suffering above those of the legal sacrifices, and their excellence to purge the conscience, and puts the emphasis of a "how much more?" The very foundation of our redemption by his blood, is his being the image of the invisible God: "In whom we have redemption through his blood; who is the image of the invisible God," Colos. i. 14, 15.

(5.) Hence it follows, that the sufferings of this person, because of his dignity, were equivalent to an endless duration of punishment; because the infiniteness of the person did more than recompense the shortness of the duration of his punishment. As the dignity of his person did outweigh the persons of all the angels, and all men in the world, had they been without spot; so the time of his sufferings, though the moments of enduring them had been fewer, in regard of his greatness was equivalent to the eternity of the sufferings of all creatures; because it was more that God should suffer one minute, than that all creatures in heaven

and earth should endure torments to an endless eternity.

(6.) Hence it follows, that in regard of the dignity of his person, he was not only equivalent, but superior to all those for whom he was a sacrifice; and to all, for which he was a sacrifice. The sacrifice was as noble as the sin was vile, and offered by a hand more honourable than the persons, by whom the crime was committed, could be unworthy. The dignity of the person was greater than the meanness of the offender could be base. The sin could not be more infinitely evil than the person satisfying was infinitely excellent. What an infinite object suffered by the offence, was made up by an infinite subject expiating the crime. The dignity of his person is the reason why his righteousness hath a sufficiency in it for all "unto justification of life," Rom. v. 19, 20. He is superior to all that were to be redeemed by him out of every kindred, and tongue, people, and nation, because he is God blessed for ever. The oblation is greater than the offence, and the offerer than the transgressor What wrath so infinite, that the blood of an infinite God cannot calm? What death so sharp and strong, that the life of God cannot remove? It should be no less a cordial to us, than it is a savour to God, to think that our sacrifice is as infinite as the wrath we had merited, and more infinite than the sin whereby we had deserved it. Our sin was objectively infinite, as committed against God; our sacrifice was objectively infinite, as offered to God, proportionable to the honour he would have repaired; and subjectively infinite, in regard of the sacrifice offered for the

reparation of it. God regarded him as the man his fellow, when he struck him; we should regard him in the same relation, when we plead him. To conclude: since this victim was equal with God, equal with him in essence, equal with him in nature and perfections, he could not be displeased with the sacrifice, unless he had been displeased with himself, and his own nature.

Ans. 2. As the dignity of the person, so the purity of the sacrifice, renders it fragrant to God, and efficacious for us. His freedom from taint, and conjunction with the fulness of the Deity, are linked together in demonstrating the efficacy of it to purge our consciences from dead works: "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot," Heb. ix. 14. He was as free from blemish, as full of an eternal Spirit. The spotlessness of his human nature was necessary to his being a sacrifice, and the union of the divine nature was necessary to his being a valuable one. As the legal lambs were to be without blemish, so was Christ a "Lamb without spot," 1 Pet. i. 19. He had no sin naturally imputed, (juridically indeed he had,) no sin personally inherent: he had no sin naturally imputed, because he was not in the loins of him who introduced sin into the world, and derived it to his posterity. His extraordinary conception by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin was a bar against original sin; whence, by way of emphasis, he is called "that holy thing," Luke i. 35. He was infinitely holy as he was God, habitually holy as he was man. Every faculty of his soul, every member of his body, was elevated to the highest degree of holiness. His human nature was holy by the union of the divine, holy by the

effusion of the Spirit, whose office it is to sanctify Though, by reason of the divine nature united it was impossible but that his human nature should be holy, (the person of the Son of God would never have assumed a tainted nature,) yet the holiness of his human nature did flow from the stores of the Spirit, it being not the office of the second, but of the third person, to sanctify. But the human nature in conjunction with the divine, could not but be pure. Had that been tainted while in union with the divine, making but one person, the taint might have been called the sin of God, as well as the blood of his body be called the blood of God: a thing therefore not to be imagined possible; he was holy in every action. As he was man he was bound to all sorts of obedience; for, having taken the nature, he was subject to all the duties incumbent on that nature; and he did run through every economy, he observed the law of nature, conformed to the ceremonial part of the Mosaic institutions, submitted to the baptism of John, a middle state of the church, and therein "fulfilled all righteousness," Matt. iii. 15. the righteousness of the positive laws of God in every state. He was holy in all his offices, harmless as a priest, faithful as a prophet; holy in his life, holy in his death; no guile was found in his mouth, no inordination of murmuring in his heart. Had there been any spot, which is impossible, his sacrifice could not have been for our sins, it must have been for his own; if his own debt could have been paid by it, ours could not: his spot had been infinitely greater than ours can be; it had been objectively infinite as ours, and subjectively infinite

which is more than ours. The rights of God had been more invaded, instead of being repaired, the guilt would have been as great in the sinner, as the satisfaction could have been in the sufferer, a subjective infiniteness in the sin, as well as a subjective infiniteness in the sacrifice. But there was not, there could not, be any of this; Satan could not charge him with any, but confessed him holy, Mark i. 24. The all-discerning eye of God could see nothing contrary to his honour, but justified him as holy, Heb. vii. 26. Impurity had been contrary to the dignity of his person: God could as well be unholy, as the person of Christ unholy. His holiness therefore was infinite, though the holiness of his human nature was not of itself infinite, no more than his sufferings were of themselves, and in regard of the human nature, the subject suffering, infinite; yet the holiness of his human nature derived an infiniteness from his person, as well as his sufferings derived from it an infinite value; so that there was an infinite holiness in this sacrifice offered to an infinitely holy God. It had no stain to be purged by the addition of another bloody offering. It answered the design of God, terminated the rest and delight of God. Such a holiness must needs then be highly acceptable to God, who loves and is delighted with righteousness in his creature, much more with that of his only Son, the unstained and infinitely pure sacrifice for us.

Ans. 3. The graces exercised in this sacrifice, rendered it fragrant in the account of God.

(1.) His obedience. The acceptableness of it to God did not arise simply from his dying, but his obedience in his death, "became obedient unto

death," Phil. ii. 8. and not only from an obedience to the law of nature, and the precepts of God as a creature, but his obedience to the law of redeeming love as a Mediator, and his delight in it, Psa xl. 8. As the disobedience of man shook the rest of God, so the obedience of the Son of God settled the rest of the Deity. Obedience ran through the whole web of his life, he submitted to a body fitted for those dreadful strokes of wrath we should have endured; a body made under the law, Gal. iv. 4. He delighted in the thoughts of performing the will of God in our flesh; he came not to do his own will; whatsoever his Father ordered him, that he spake, that he did, that he suffered, he laid down his body when the hour was come appointed by his Father; it was not a simple but an affectionate obedience: "I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do," John xiv. 31. where principally his obedience to the mediatorial law is intended; as also, "obedient to the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 8. which the law did not oblige him to: the moral law bound over the sinner to death, but the mediatorial law bound over Christ to death in our stead. The obedience to the moral law, or law of nature, as it concerned the state of angels, was performed by him without any defect; in this the obedience of Christ was greater than theirs, in regard of the infinite dignity of his person above all the angels in heaven, yet the rule of their obedience was of the same nature: but in the obedience of the mediatorial law, the Redeemer stood single; as he trod the wine-press alone, so in the whole mediatorial work none were in conjunction with him, none had any likeness or resemblance to him. This was above

the obedience of all creatures, not only in regard that it was the obedience of him who was God, but an obedience wherein he could not be imitated by any creature already created, or that could be created, it being a work above the strength of any created being. It was obedience under the highest provocations to resume his glory, and come down from the cross, and declare at that moment the iniquity of those reproaches they cast upon him. Obedience in the highest pitch of his sufferings, obedience in heaven, practising that compassionate obedience upon the throne, which he "learned by his sufferings" on the cross, Heb. v. 8. acting according to his Father's orders, presenting his obedience on the cross, as meritorious for his members he left in the world. If the obedience of Abraham a sinful creature, in his willingness to offer up his son Isaac a sinful creature also, was so pleasing to God, that thereupon he makes him glorious promises; how much more grateful is the obedience of him who was God, and offered not up a son, but himself, a pure, not a spotted sacrifice If obedience be better than sacrifice, then sacrifice is insignificant without obedience; the offering himself a sacrifice according to the will of God for our sanctification, was the most significant part of his obedience, Heb. x. 7, 10. In this he did exactly answer the mediatorial law as his rule, and God found the will of Christ in the performance, fully conformable to his own will in the precept, more obedient to the will of God in his offering, than Adam was disobedient to the will of God in his sinning. Such a height and perpetuity of obedience under all the circumstances of temptations, the strugglings of the flesh, which could not

but desire the removal of penal evil, under the fear of wrath also, the sense of agonies, and reproaches of men, whereby he testified, that he preferred the glory of his Father above the safety of his own nature, obedience to his command above the contentment of his flesh, and was swayed by the form of a servant to submit, against the suggestions of his nature as a man, to desire the passing it away; all this, I say, rendered his sacrifice highly acceptable.

(2.) His humility. His humility is joined with his obedience, as the cause of his exaltation, which was the evidence of its fragrancy, Phil. ii. 8. God loves to be imitated in his condescensions to his creature. The condescension of Christ equal with God, to the taking upon him the form of a servant, setting himself in the stead of the sinner, the eclipsing his own glory, shrouding it under the disguise of our flesh, submitting to a harder piece of service and a deeper humiliation, than any creature in heaven or earth was capable of; to descend from heaven to earth, expose himself to the fury of men and devils without murmuring; to bow his head to the stroke, not of an honourable, but an infamous death, endure the wrath of a Father he loved, come down to the lowest step before he did re-assume the glory which was due to him, was an inexpressible and inimitable act of humility. Lower than this he could not humble himself. Since humility renders men so pleasing to God, that he heaps upon them the greatest testimonies of his favour, and richly dispenseth to them the gifts of his grace, James iv. 6. it must render the Son in those sufferings most acceptable to his Father and draw from him the greatest distribution of his

favour, because it was the greatest act of humility. as well as obedience, that could possibly be performed.

(3.) His faith. This resolution of trust he brought with him, and this resolution he kept: "I will put my trust in him," Heb. ii. 13. cited out of Psalm xviii. 2. He had not a spark of infidelity, or any grain of distrust in the goodness of God. He suffered for a time the torments of hell, without the despair of the inhabitants of hell; he had a working of faith under the sense of his Father's greatest displeasure, and confided in his love while he felt the outward and inward force of his frowns. The sharpness of the scourge, and the smart of his wounds, beat not off his soul from a fast adherence to him. He had a faith of the acceptableness of his death for his elect, and gave evidence of his confidence in the promise for a happy and glorious success, in acting like a king, while he was hanging as a malefactor on the cross, in distributing his largesses to the poor thief, assuring him, that that day he should be with him in paradise. He let not his confidence in his Father flinch; he confided in him for the bestowing that royal power upon him, which he signified by this promise of paradise to this criminal upon the cross: and both his obedience to God in not turning away his back, and his trust in God for his assistance, are put together as the ground of his justification, Isa. l. 5. 7, 8. The height of his faith was to be discovered in opposition to the unbelief of Adam; his humility, in opposition to the pride of Adam; his obedience in doing all according to God's order, in opposition to the disobedience of Adam. By his active and passive obedience, he glorified the

holiness and justice of God; by his humility, the sovereignty and power of God; by his trust, the faithfulness and veracity of God: all which must needs render his sacrifice as a sweet-smelling savour, and efficacious for us.

Ans. 4. In regard of the full compensation made to God by this sacrifice, and the equivalence of it to all the demands of God. His obedience was fully answerable to the law, his active answered the preceptive part, and his passive the penalty; as he fulfilled the righteousness of the law in his life, so he underwent the threatenings of the law in his death; he obeyed the commands in our stead, and sustained the curse. He bore the sorrows we should bear: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," Isa. liii. 4. spiritual as well as bodily. He took our nature, soul and body, to suffer in that nature what was due to our souls and bodies. Our whole nature had sinned, and our whole nature must suffer; Christ took our nature, that he might suffer what was due to our nature. He suffered in his soul, which is the greatest part of our nature, as well as in his body, which is but the case and sheath of the soul. It is against the order of justice, for the principal to sin, and the accessory only to be punished. The punishment threatened against the first Adam, was the death of the soul, as well as of the body; the punishment borne by the second Adam was of the same nature; not a spiritual death, a separation from God by sin, that he was not capable of, but a moral death, a separation from God by desertion. When he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he was forsaken of God in regard of the sensible comforts of his presence,

though not in regard of the invisible sustentations of his soul. The union of the two natures was not dissolved, but the comfort of the Father's presence was eclipsed. Though he did not suffer eternity of torments, yet he suffered what was due to us; for eternity of punishment is not primarily threatened in the law, but secondarily inferred. Death was threatened, but because man cannot satisfy by death, therefore he lies under that death for ever. He is kept in prison, because he cannot pay the debt which was due, nor repair the honour of the law which was violated. Justice would always be striking, and never contented. If the honour of the law could have been vindicated, and the justice of God satisfied, by the temporary groans of a creature, not only the goodness of God, but the justice of God would release him; but because the justice of God could never have been satisfied, the person of the sinner must always have been a sufferer. Christ therefore suffering a cursed death, suffered what we should have suffered; death was threatened to us, and death was inflicted on him; the eternity of death was accidental. As Christ obeyed the whole law, yet not every accidental relation of the law, as it respected men in particular states, and particular callings and relations; as the duty of a parent to a child, of a husband to a wife; not for want of a principle of obedience in him, but for want of those particular relations to which those particular acts of obedience were annexed; so Christ suffered every part of the curse, but not the sins consequent upon that curse by reason of the corruption of man, nor the accidental continuance of the curse, which the impotence of man to satisfy, rendered him obnoxious to, but the

strength of Christ exempted him from. He endured all that the law imposed upon sinners; whether in regard of loss by desertion, or in regard of sense by malediction; hence he is said to be made a curse, Gal. iii. 13. to be made sin, 2 Cor. v. 21 And if so, he bore the punishment due to us, since the law threatened no more than a curse, and Christ bore the curse according to the threatening of the law; he suffered that which the law demanded of us, and was made such a curse as the law required. He suffered the torments of hell without the iniquities of hell, which were not possible to be committed by an infinitely holy person, he suffered those agonies which were of the nature of the torments of hell, and that desertion of God which is the sting of hell. Nothing was omitted that was demanded by divine holiness for keeping the commands, or by Divine justice for violating the commands. As we were creatures, we owed God a debt of duty; as we were revolted creatures, we owed God a debt of punishment. Since our fall, sin hath made us incapable to answer the holiness of God in the performance of our duty, and our nature as creatures renders us too weak to satisfy the justice of God by enduring the penalty exacted by the law. Christ hath done both, and in answering the whole demand of the law, as to both debts, delights the holiness of God, satisfies the justice of God, and by both repairs the creature. If the creature could have satisfied justice for what was past, yet it still lay under a debt of duty for the time to come. If it had fallen short of this, it must have re-assumed its suffering. What a deplorable condition had this been, to have come out of suffering one hour, and to

return to it the next! But our Redeemer performs an obedience that reacheth to the utmost of the creature's duty, and endures a penalty that reaches to the utmost of the creature's demerits A recompense was made by the obedience of Christ for the disobedience of Adam, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. for what had the law to enjoin which he did not perform, or what had the law to inflict which he did not endure? Had he not done and suffered what the law required, how could he be called the end or perfection "of the law for righteousness," Rom. x. 4. Had he not suffered what was due to sin, he could not have "made an end of it;" and had he not done what the law commanded, he could not have brought in an "everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24. He is both a valuable price and sacrifice commensurate to the demerit of our crimes; he suffered whatsoever was requisite to discharge our debts, and could not have offered his soul instead of ours, if he had not borne in his soul what we were to bear in ours; in regard therefore of the full compensation made to God, it must needs be fragrant to God, and efficacious for us.

Ans. 5. In regard of the glory Christ by his sacrifice brought to God. The glory of God was that which he aimed at, and that which he perfected. It was the will of God which he came to do; but the design of God's will is to glorify himself, and declare his own name in all his acts. The glory of all the attributes of God appeared "in the face," or manifestation, "of Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. They all centered in him, and shone forth from

him in all their brightness, and in a full combination set off one another's lustre; not only in his incarnation, but also, and that chiefly, in his sacrifice. Mercy could not be glorified, unless justice had been satisfied, and justice had not been evident, if the tokens of divine wrath had not been upon him; grace had not sailed to us, but in the streams of his blood, "without blood there is no remission;" justice had not been so fully known in the eternal groans of a world of creatures, nor could sin have appeared so odious to the holiness of God by eternal scars upon devils and men, as by the deluge of blood from the heart of this sacrifice. Wisdom in the contrivance, had not been evident without the execution. The glory of the divine perfections had lain him in the cabinet of the divine nature, without the discovery of their full beams; and though they were active in the designing it, yet they had not been declared to men or angels, without the bringing Christ to the altar. By the stroke upon his soul, all the glories of God flashed out to the view of the creature. When Judas went out from his company to prepare the way for his oblation, "Now," saith he, "is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him," John xiii. 31. The honour of God, and the glory of the Son, depended upon this point, and in this last act threw off all their vails: the Father was glorified in appointing him, and the Son was glorified in submitting to be a sacrifice; the truth of God was glorified in bringing things to a period; and the obedience of his Son was glorified in his perseverance to the last act; his grace was elevated to the highest note in the

songs of angels; an unsearchable depth of manifold wisdom was unfolded, a depth of wisdom more impossible to be comprehended in our minds, than the whole globe of heaven and earth in our hands; such a wisdom of God in the cross, which the angels never beheld in his face upon his throne; wisdom to cure a desperate disease by the death of the physician, to turn the greatest evil to the greatest glory, to bring forth mercy by the shedding of blood. The ultimate design of this victim, was the honour of God in our redemption: "Christ sought not his own glory, but the glory of his Father," John viii. 50. in the salvation of men. That must needs be fragrant to God, that accomplished the triumph of all his attributes.

III. Use.

1. If this sacrifice be acceptable to God, it is then a perfect oblation. If it had not been perfect in itself, it could not have been accepted by an infinite justice, a justice inexorable without it. An incomplete offering, could have given but an imperfect satisfaction, and that had been as good as no satisfaction at all. God would never have approved it; an all-seeing wisdom could not be deceived, a severe justice could not have acquiesced in it, a pure holiness could not have smelt a sweet savour from it. God as a Judge delivered him to be a sacrifice, God as a Judge accepted him after he was offered; this sacrifice therefore answered the ends of God, both satisfied his justice, and glorified his holiness; how could God else judicially glorify him, if he had not been fully glorified by him? If he had performed an imperfect obedience, he would at the best have had but a

half exaltation, or rather none; but since he hath been accepted with the highest pleasure, and hath a glory in the highest pitch, he hath performed an obedience to the utmost point, and touched the goal designed him. Though there was grace in God's appointing it, yet there was no grace given out to make it acceptable. God did not supply by his acceptation any defect in the sacrifice; there was a meritorious worthiness on Christ's part, before there was an acceptation on God's part; it was not perfect by acceptation, but it was accepted because of its perfection. Infinite purity accepts nothing but what is perfect in itself, or hath a relation to that which is perfect and agreeable to its nature. He doth indeed accept the imperfect obedience of believers, but not for itself, but for this sacrifice, to which by faith it hath a relation. Had it not had a gratefulness in itself, God could have scented nothing in it; he could not have smelt a savour where none was; it would have been as little pleasing to him, as the burnt-offerings under the law. This could not but be perfect in the account of God, since there was the humanity in conjunction with the divinity to be the sacrifice, and the divinity in conjunction with the humanity to be the altar for the sanctification of it; and the sequel shows, that the offering hath been as valuable as the offence was provoking, since in consideration of it, justice forgets the injuries done to the Deity, and treats believers as heirs of heaven, instead of rebels; it is the inference the apostle draws from the priesthood of Christ, Heb. viii. 12. and what is the fruit of his priesthood, is the fruit likewise of his sacrifice. The righteousness of Christ is also perfect, since the all-searching eye

of God sees nothing in it to give him any cause of distaste; it is perfect because everlasting, Dan. ix. 24. All the righteousness of the holy angels in heaven, had there been numberless millions of them, had not been so pleasing to God as this.

2. All popish doctrines of satisfactions, and all resting upon our own righteousness and inherent graces, are to be abandoned. There is a natural popery in the minds of men; fallen man is desirous to stand upon his own foundation, and is as little content with God's judgment of things, as his first parent was in paradise. We are studious of making God compensations, applauding ourselves in our own inventions and satisfactions of our own minting, unwilling to acquiesce in his wisdom.

(1.) This is a high presumption. If Christ were a perfect sacrifice in the esteem of God, it is a boldness and blasphemy in us not to think him so: if it be perfect, what need of any thing from us to piece it out? If it were not sufficient, God was much mistaken to accept it; if it were not perfect, Christ had a want of strength and holiness to be a sacrifice, and God a want of wisdom to discern the defects of it; he was then deceived, to count that sweet which needed something else to sweeten it. Such additions are an injury to Christ; it is to make him but half a sacrifice, since he hath "offered himself to God without spot," Heb. ix. 14. Can we pretend to any other, without charging him with weakness and deficiency? Is not his divinity enough to make his offering complete, without any supply from our corrupt humanity? Can we acknowledge that perfect, which we think needs something from us to strengthen it? It must be then a false assertion of the apostle,

when he saith, that, "by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. To make Christ in part a Saviour, is to make him in part no Saviour, and to ascribe salvation to something else as well as to him. All such satisfactions entrench upon the honour of Christ's sacrifice, and pull the crown from his head to set it upon our own; or, at best, ascribe that in part to ourselves, which is wholly due to him; by how much the more sufficient it is for us without any addition, so much the more glory redounds to the sacrifice. He needs no more of additions to sweeten his offering, than he needed of cordials to strengthen and support him in the time of his sufferings: they are rather gall and vinegar offered him upon his throne, as the Jews did in the time of his oblation upon the cross. It is a high presumption in us not to be content to rest in that, which is the rest and pleasure of God.

(2.) It is a folly. It is as if a man should set up candles to increase the light of the sun, and eke out its beams. Can the righteousness of a man add any perfection to the blood of a God? or perfect a work which could not be done by the Deity? If God stood not in need of any thing from us to perfect his work of creation, how can man be so foolish to imagine, that Christ stands in need of any thing from us to perfect his work of redemption? If that sacrifice wants something to render it efficacious, it must be a sacrifice of the same kind; nothing that is of an inferior nature can add an intrinsic value to that which is superior. What can man offer to God, that can be in any sort equivalent to this sacrifice

already accepted? All that we can offer to God is but as a few blasted ears of corn, such as Pharaoh saw in a dream, which can add nothing to the value of it. If there had been any failure in him, the defects of a Redeemer could not be repaired by the offerings of the captives; and if there be no failure, all additions, all other inventions of atonement are superfluous. How foolish will it be, to rest in that which God never pronounced or owned to be a sweet-smelling savour to him? If all our "righteousness" be as a "filthy rag," Isa. lxiv. 6. the offering it up to God is a noisome stench, not a pleasure. The best of our works and graces derive a sweetness and value from the virtue of this sacrifice, without contributing any thing to the savour of it. It is a folly to leave a sure for an uncertain road. All other rests have no divine stamp and signature upon them. God never found any savour in any other offering. The Spirit of God never gave any so noble a character as this, of a sweet-smelling savour, but as they had a relation to this as the antitype of them. This one victim sends forth more grateful odours to God, and is more efficacious for the concerns of our souls, than the joint intercessions of saints and angels. Let us therefore be diligent in our duties, aim at the perfection of an inherent righteousness, but never place our confidence in them, or equal them to the sacrifice God hath so affectionately accepted. Did God ever set up his rest in the services of a creature? Can this be savoury to an infinite purity? Whatsoever is done without faith, is but the offering of an enemy, whatsoever fair colours it may be outwardly adorned with. The scripture

sets an impossibility upon the head of all these: "Without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6. to gain or keep his favour. Whatsoever is done without faith, though of the highest elevation, is but a creature, and therefore not the object of trust. And whatever significancy believing works have, is from the tincture they receive from the blood of this sacrifice, wherein faith dips them, as being faith in the blood of Christ. Though Adam, while he continued in his created rectitude, might have entered his righteousness as a plea; yet because it was mutable, it had been no fit object of trust for him. But since our revolt, all pleas of a fleshly corrupted righteousness are overruled in the court of heaven, and our pleas must run in another name; all other things have ceased to be savoury to God, since they were tainted by sin. Let men "make lies their refuge," and hide themselves under falsehood, the false coverings of their own righteousness, and think to shelter themselves from the "overflowing scourge," Isa. xxviii. 15—17. It will be a miserable self-deceit, "the hail will sweep away such a refuge," and the "waters will overflow such a hiding-place." All other hiding-places, but the smoke of this sacrifice, are too weak to preserve us from the overflowing waters of divine vengeance.

3. It is a desperate thing to refuse this sacrifice, which is so sweet to God.

(1.) It is a great sin. As faith in Christ redounds to the honour of God, as being an ap probation of his mercy, justice, and wisdom, in the acceptance of this sacrifice; so unbelief redounds to the contempt of God, as slighting all the pleasure,

the wisdom, the justice and holiness of God took in it, as though he were delighted with a sleeveless and unworthy matter. It is to trample upon that which is God's delight, accounting that which is sweet to the Deity, loathsome to us, refusing to be guided by God's judgment of this offering, setting up our own wisdom, not only equal with, but above the wisdom of God; a regarding that which God is infinitely pleased with, as a frivolous thing, as though God had pleased himself with a trifle, or smelt sweetness in a weed. God's acceptation of it owns a fragrancy in it; man's refusal calls it gall and vinegar, a rotten service. God's language is, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matt. iii. 17. This is my odoriferous sacrifice with which I am infinitely delighted. The language of an unbeliever's heart is, This is an offering in which I can find no pleasure. The heart of God, and the heart of an unbeliever, the wisdom of God, and the judgment of an unbeliever, stand in direct opposition. How inexcusable a pride is it, to think that not worth our receiving, which God hath entertained with the highest affection! to count that unsavoury, which God hath accepted as the sweetest present that can be given him in heaven or earth! Unbelief cannot be excused without accusing God of weakness and folly. It is a sin against his precept, as he commands us to believe; a sin against his pattern, as he directs us by his own act to an acceptance of him. Other sins are against his sovereignty in the violations of his law. This is against his wisdom in his gracious acceptation of a propitiating sacrifice for us. We disown him as our Lord, and as our pattern.

(2.) It will end in great misery. God wil not suffer that which is sweet to him, to be slighted by man, without the recompense of a just indignation. The vagabond nation of the Jews bears to this day the sad tokens of God's vengeance upon them, for the unworthy refusal of so great a victim. "Because of unbelief they are broken off" from the root, Rom. xi. 20. and are deprived of all the sweetness which God and believers taste in it. Nothing in the world was ever the object of God's delight but this; nothing in the world can ever be pleasant to him without this. To neglect it, is to neglect that which is the only thing God will accept, and so fall under the condemnation of law and gospel too. It is to reject God as a satisfied Judge, in the flowings of his mercy; to fall under God as a provoked Judge, in the thunders of his wrath. If we will not comply with divine justice in an estimation of it, we must fall under his fury for our contempt. If this offering be not cordially and upon God's terms accepted by us, we must be a sacrifice ourselves; Justice must have a sacrifice for every sinner, from himself or another. God in honour will not pardon sin without one, in greater honour he cannot but punish sin upon the refusal of this. Oh how "fearful a thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God!" a living unpacified God, a living and reproached God, a living God who hath been counted a ridiculous fool by a wilful sinner, in his accounting the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing. God will not have his wisdom justled against by the folly of his creature. "No other sacrifice remains for sin." No other mark of distinction was appointed by God for the securing the first-born of the Israelites

from the stroke intended for the Egyptian heirs, but the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon the posts of the doors: had any fed upon the lamb and neglected the sprinkling, he had felt the sharp sword of the destroying angel. The lamb had been of no efficacy to him, not for any defect in that, but negligence or contempt in the offender. The sacrifice of Christ hath an infinite virtue to save. But it is no remedy to them that will not sprinkle their souls by faith with the blood of it: without this, we shall remain in our unatoned sins, and have the sword of vengeance doubly whetted against us.

4. It administers matter of comfort to the believer. It is some comfort to all, that they are in a fair way of being happy. The justice of God was the bar to God and man's meeting together. It was morally impossible, in regard of God's truth and holiness, for man to be restored without a vindication of that law which had been broken; but now the honour of the law is restored by this sacrifice; God hath owned it, the bar is removed and where God hath found a sweetness, man may find salvation, if he be not his own enemy, and wilfully cast away his own mercy. "He gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. a ransom in our stead, or a counter-ransom, in opposition to the sin of Adam, the fountain of our bondage; for all upon gospel-conditions. As he gave himself for all, so he was accepted for all upon the same conditions; for he was accepted as he gave himself It is a comfort to a diseased hospital, that a physician is chosen and accepted by the governors, who is able to cure every disease: it is no less a comfort to a guilty soul, that there is a sacrifice

sufficient to expiate every sin. But there is a ground of sensible comfort to those who believe. If when Christ walked upon the waters, and was labouring in the floods of affliction in the days of his humiliation, he bid his disciples not to fear; how much more may we expel fear from our believing hearts, since he is sat down upon his throne, and the whole merit of his sacrifice graciously accepted? Let us represent to ourselves this crucified, but now crowned victim, lying in the bosom of his Father, represent to ourselves the Father full of delights, rejoicing in the views of this sacrificed body, drawing a perpetual stream of pleasure and sweet smells from the fumes of this sacrifice rising up continually before him. May not this calm our fears, since it smooths the frowns of divine justice? Did the people shout when the ark returned, and shall our hearts be full of fears, when our sacrifice is returned to heaven, and hath found a gracious reception from that justice we had so highly provoked? A disconsolate carriage in a holy believer implies, that God had rejected it as mean and weak, rather than received it as perfect and glorious. A heavy walking is a disparagement to the greatness of the sacrifice, and the wisdom and judgment of God the acceptor of it. If we should eat our bread with a merry heart, because God hath accepted our works, Eccles. ix. 7. much more since God hath accepted our victim, by whose merits our duties and works smell sweet, that before smelt rank by nature. We should therefore draw as much sweetness from this sacrifice for our souls, according to our measures, as God did from it for his own content and satisfaction.

It appeased God's fury against us, and should banish our jealousies of God.

(1.) If once acceptable to God, then it is for ever acceptable. If once sweet, it is always sweet. God cannot be deceived in his estimations, nor change his value of it, nor can the sacrifice ever become noisome. The strength of the divine nature, that rendered it at first grateful, preserves its savour for ever. He died to offer it, and lives to preserve the virtue of it, Rom. v. 10. The fragrancy conferred upon it by the Deity in conjunction with the humanity, is as durable as the Deity itself: "He sat down on the right hand of God," Heb. x. 11. after he had offered himself a sacrifice, to exercise the office of a Priest. God would have the Priest and sacrifice for ever in his sight. His priesthood is for ever, his sacrifice therefore is for ever sweet. Without a sacrifice he could not be a Priest. As his priesthood hath a perpetual vigour, so his sacrifice hath a perpetual freshness, and inexhaustible virtue. For the exercise of his office depends upon the continuance of the offering. The blood of this sacrifice is not compared to a pond, or water in a vessel, though of the largest capacity, but to a living and ever-running fountain, "a fountain set open for the house of David," Zech. xiii. 1. Repentance was hid from the eyes of Christ in offering it for a ransom from the power of the grave, and a redemption from death, Hos. xiii. 14. and no less is repentance hid from the eyes of God in accepting it. The covenant sealed by it is everlasting, and derives its duration from this blood of the victim, Heb. xiii. 20. the virtue of it endures as long as the covenant, since if that

failed, the covenant would expire, the superstructure not being able to stand, if the foundation be rotten. And from hence an everlasting righteousness is derived, that our persons, odious by Adam, may be beautiful by Christ. At the same time that he made reconciliation for iniquity, he brought in everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. at the same time therefore that God accepted that reconciliation, he accepted that everlasting righteousness for security and justification. He hath not pacified God for a few days or years, but for ever, Heb. x. 14. If it were so sweet in the expectation, as to be the ground of the justification of those that hoped for it, it is much more sweet since the oblation, and of a stronger efficacy. He is the Captain of the salvation of all the sons that are brought to glory, and that believe. Himself was "made perfect through sufferings," Heb. ii. 10. The "twenty-four elders" confessed themselves "redeemed by this blood," Rev. v. 8, 9. The patriarchs that died before him, as well as the apostles who expired after him. He was a lamb, a sacrifice "slain from the foundation of the world," Revel. xiii. 8. Not in regard of decree, (that were a jejune sense of the place, as it would be to say, a man were dead from the foundation of the world, because it was appointed for him once to die,) but in regard of efficacy and a mystical sprinkling of his blood upon those that lived at the beginning, as well as those that shall live at the end of the world. If it had a savour with God for those that lived before him, it hath much more a savour for those that have lived since his actual offering and acceptation.

(2.) From this ariseth pardon of sin. He was a sweet savour as he offered himself, and in the ends for which he offered himself. He was a sacrifice for sin. For so those words in Rom. viii. 3. which we translate "and for sin," must be understood, and read thus: "And by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." If offered for sin, and accepted as an offering for sin, the consequence of this must be remission. Through the blood of that Beloved, whom he accepted, we have "redemption, even the forgiveness of sin," Eph. i. 6, 7. not of one, or two, or a few sins, but all; he was made sin indefinitely, all kind of sin in the extent, as much made sin as he was made accused; as he bore all the curse, so he satisfied for all sin, the greatest as well as the least; so that the blood of this sacrifice "cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7. where gospel dispositions are found; from all that from which the law of Moses could not justify: "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts xiii. 39. What was impossible to be done by the sacrifices of the law, is completely done by the offering of the Redeemer. The strength of this is directly opposite to the weakness of the other; that could not really justify from any, and this is able to justify from all. As it was not over-valued by God, so it cannot be over-balanced by sin; since the judgment of God hath passed upon it with an approbation, the monstrousness of guilt is not too great for an expiation. Whatsoever our sins are, yet they have their limits; but God's infinite pleasure in the sacrifice speaks the merit of it infinite, and the efficacy of it eternal. All sins were at once laid

upon the head of this offering, Isa. liii. 7. He suffered but once, and therefore at *that one time* all sins by one act were laid upon his shoulders, "he bore them his own self," 1 Peter ii. 24. and God accepted him his own self, and accepted him as he bore them, and glorified him because he purged them, Heb. i. 3. So that though he did but once offer himself, and that for all sins in the bulk, he was received with a welcome, as if he had offered in particular for every sin; and therefore there is no more need of an offering, but a recourse to that one price. To think it is not able to expiate all sin, is to undervalue the judgment God hath given of his Son, to charge him with a mistake, and to imagine, that there is more in sin to ruin, than in this sacrifice to repair.

(3.) Hence then there can be no condemnation to them that are in Christ. The apostle lays down this conclusion, and confirms it by the reason of his being a sacrifice, Rom. viii. 1, 3. They whc are presented by Christ, quickened by the virtue of this sacrifice, cannot fall under the stroke of divine justice. If it was offered for those that should believe, it was accepted for such as should believe, it being accepted for the same persons and the same ends for which it was offered, and therefore those persons fundamentally accepted in the acceptation of it, and the ends for which it was offered, granted, and concluded on in the act of acceptation. The apostle upon this score breathes out a challenge to all to bring a condemning charge against him; the justice of God, the curse of the law, the charges of conscience, and the accusations of devils may be all answered by this: "It is Christ that died, it is God that justifies," Rom. viii. 33, 34.

It is Christ that is offered, and God that accepts. Justice cannot condemn; for though his sacrifice was sweet and pleasant to all the perfections of the divine nature, yet justice was the peculiar object of it. God as a Judge delivered him, God as a Judge accepted him: justice required it, and justice is disarmed by it; justice only was to be contented; mercy required no blood; wisdom stepped in to decide the controversy, and make an agreement. If the condemning attribute be satisfied, there is no condemnation to be expected. If it be sweet to justice, justice cannot retain its former frowns; justice cannot be pleased with that, and displeased with those for whom it was offered and accepted, and by whom it is received. It is part of our happiness, that we come not only to God as gracious, but God as a Judge: "To God the Judge of all," Heb. xii. 23. As Christ was made sin for us, so are we made righteous by him. He was made sin to undergo a condemnation, that we might be made righteous, and be above a condemnation. It is more efficacious to divert the sword of divine justice from the believing offender, than the blood of the paschal lamb was to turn the edge of the angel's sword from the house of an Israelite. The blood of Christ sprinkled, cannot be of less force than the blood of a silly lamb, since the efficacy of it was not as it was the blood of a lamb, but the blood of a type, deriving its virtue, not from the subject whence the blood was drawn, but from the person signified, and the sacrifice prefigured, by it. Well then, his condemnation hath procured our absolution, and God's acceptation of him hath ensured our liberty; the sweet savour of the sacrifice hath overcome the

stench of our sins. Though God forsook him for a time, he hath now accepted him, that he may not abandon us for ever; neither the wrath of God, nor the malediction of the law, is to be feared. God, by this one act, hath stopped the course of his vengeance, and laid aside the thunders of Sinai. The flames we had deserved are quenched by the blood flowing from the wounds of this victim; the smoke of our sacrifice shadows us, and, in God's acceptance of him, every believer finds his infallible absolution.

(4.) Here is a sufficient ground for peace of conscience. This only can give a repose to our spirits, turn our fears into hopes, and our sorrows into songs. If it were a sweet savour to God, whose infinite knowledge was acquainted with the least mite, as well as the greatest mountain in the number of our sins, and whose holiness found an infinite loathsomeness in our iniquities; if it thus contented God, it may settle the agitations of our spirits; and because it stilled fury in God, it may silence troubles in us; if it gave God a delight, who in the knowledge of our sins, loathing of them, and condemning for them, is "greater than our hearts," 1 John iii. 20. it is a ground of peace to us, who come infinitely short of God in knowing our charge, infinitely short of his holiness in loathing our guilt, and infinitely short of his justice in condemning ourselves. That which hath been a sweet savour to pacify God, wants not a savour to appease our consciences. Our great inquiry is in troubles of spirit, how shall we appear before God? The answer from this doctrine is, In the smoke of this sacrifice; the impurities of our natures, the sin

of our souls, and the mixture in our services are purified by this. The sweetness of this sacrifice hath sweetened the terrors of the Lord, and rendered man a welcome supplicant to that God, before whom he durst not formerly appear.

(5.) Here is a full ground of expectation of all necessary blessings. God accepted it as it was offered; it was offered, not only as a propitiating, but a purchasing sacrifice, and the acceptance of it was in the same quality wherein it was offered, Acts xx. 28. His blood was a purchasing blood; he purchased a people for heaven, and purchased heaven for his people; he did not only silence justice with its wrath, but merited heaven with its riches, and shed his blood as a price for the pleasures of paradise. God judged this sacrifice, not only enough to free man from misery, but instate him in happiness; not only to deliver our souls from the pit, but to enlighten us with the light of the living. It was valued by him as a full compensation for the wrongs he had sustained, and a full merit for the blessings we wanted. When he found this ransom, his voice was not only "Deliver him from going down into the pit," but I will "make his flesh fresher than a child's;" a strength and vigour of grace shall be restored in him, as the radical moisture in a child: "He shall return to the days of his youth, he shall pray to God, and God will be favourable to him, and he shall see his face with joy," Job xxxiii. 24—26. The Israelites addressed themselves to the propitiatory,* not only for the pardon of their sins, but the conferring of other blessings; this is the blood of the covenant, and therefore

* The Mercy-seat.

procures for us the blessings of the covenant. The blessings we want, are often in the gospel ascribed to the merit of this sacrifice, and not simply to the grace of God. The grace of God appointed the sacrifice, but the blessings we receive, were merited by it; our victim was so pleasing to God, and the obedience in it so full of an infinite love to him, that he gained by it the affections of God, and a grant of whatsoever was most precious, to be bestowed upon those for whom he offered himself, that thereby the pleasure he took in it might be fully evidenced.

5. Let us lay hold of it, and plead this sacrifice.

(1.) Let natural men imitate God in an acceptance of this sacrifice. No man perisheth for want of God's pleasure in it, but for want of his own acceptance of it upon the gospel conditions. No bitten Israelite perished for want of a brazen serpent, but for want of a look to it. Cast not an aspersion upon God by undervaluing that which he doth so highly prize; be guided by his infallible judgment, rather than by the errors of your own; think not of it coldly, as if you were indifferent whether you had a share in it or not, since God received it not with an indifferent, but an unconceivable affection. Let that which is sweet to God, be so to us; that which is savoury to that infinite Spirit, cannot justly be unsavoury to our contracted souls. God found no sweetness in the blood of goats, or smoke of incense, Psa. l. but only in this sacrifice; nor should any of us rest in the transitory pleasures of this life, and sing a requiem to our souls from perishing enjoyments, but from the blood of the Lamb that endures for ever. There is no likelihood for a creature to find rest in that

wherein God finds none; we are not sure of our lives, but we are sure we are guilty; and shall any of us be unconcerned about a powerful sacrifice? Let a self-abhorrence possess our souls, without which we can have no esteem of this offering. As God's loathing of sin made him value this for expiation, so our sense of sin will make us value this for our atonement. Let no man think that unworthy of him, which God thinks not unworthy of himself; he commanded the angels to adore him for it, either when he brought him into the world to be a sacrifice, or brought him into the world above, after he had by his blood "purged our sins," Heb. i. 6 God would have men and angels concur with him in the magnificent acceptation of our Saviour.

(2.) Let those that believe, continually apply and plead it. This is so sweet to God, that there is no need of a new sacrifice, but there is need of a daily application; there was no need of a new serpent to be erected upon every sting, but there was need of a new looking up to the serpent upon every wound. We can be no more without this one day to comfort our souls, than we can be without bread to nourish our bodies; the remembrance of it must come up with the remembrance of every sin in our consciences. In this only shall we find mercy for our iniquities, and comfort for our sorrows. What was sweet to God in the acceptance, will be sweet to him in the pleas of it; it hath not lost its savour, nor hath God changed his judgment. Christ is in the fragrancy of his sacrifice with God, as well as in his divinity, the "same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." We contract a daily guilt, and we stand in need of a daily application to this. God will not make us perfect

in this life, to keep up the continual credit of this sacrifice, that we may live by faith, and have every day sensible thoughts of the power of this oblation. Let all our pleas with God be founded in his acceptance of this; it is always to be pleaded by us, as it is always eyed by the Father. No pardon is granted but upon the account of it; in every pardoning act, God looks first with pleasure upon this victim, and dips his pen in the blood of it, to blot out the iniquity. No blessing is poured upon us, on which the merit of this sacrifice is not stamped; and no petition must be presented by us, but in the virtue of it.

A DISCOURSE

PROVING

WEAK GRACE VICTORIOUS.

BY THE

Rev. STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.

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MATTHEW XII. 20.

A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK, AND SMOKING FLAX SHALL HE NOT QUENCH, TILL HE SEND FORTH JUDGMENT UNTO VICTORY.

We need not take our rise higher than verse 18, where the quotation out of Isa. xlii. begins, where you find God, like a herald, proclaiming his Son to the world, under the name of his servant: "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles." It contains, 1. His election of him; God chose, called him to his mediatorial office. 2. The agreeableness of the person to God; he did wholly acquiesce in him, and deposit in his hand the concerns of his glory. 3. The ability and assistance God gave him, "I will put my spirit upon him." 4. The work he should do: "he shall show judgment to the Gentiles." His coming is set down, not with pomp, or noise, "he shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets," ver. 19. The meekness and tenderness of his carriage, "he shall not cry;" he shall not be contentious with the people; of which a sign

is, an immoderate raising of the voice, and clamour against them.

Take notice here of,

1. The object, a bruised reed. Jerome takes it for a musical instrument made of a reed, which shepherds used to have, which, when bruised, sounds ill, and is flung away by the musician, as disdaining to spend his breath upon such a vile instrument that emits no pleasant sound. But Christ will not cast off poor souls that cannot make so good music in God's ears as others, and answer not the breathings of the spirit with life and vigour; but he will take pains with them to mend them. Bruised reeds, such as are convinced of their own weakness, vanity, and emptiness.

The smoking flax of the wick of a candle, wherein there is not only no profit, but some trouble and noisomeness. Though the soul is noisome by reason of its corruptions, yet he will not blow out that expiring fire, but blow it up and cherish it; he will not rigidly oppress and throw off those that are weak in grace, and faith, and hope, but he will heal them, nourish them, inflame them. Maldonat interprets it—That though he walk in the way where bruised reeds lie, he will step over them, and not break them more; he will not tread upon a little smoking flax that lies languishing upon the ground, and so put it out with his foot, though it hurts the eyes with its smoke, and offends the nostrils with its stench. Smoking souls that have some weak desires, and fumings towards heaven, some small evaporations of their spirits towards God, he shall not quench. The Chaldee paraphrase is—Those meek or gracious ones which are like a bruised reed, shall not be broken by him.

2. The act. He shall not break; not quench; he shall mightily cherish, support the reed, inflame the flax.

3. The continuance of it; till he sends forth judgment unto victory. In Isaiah it is, "Till he bring forth judgment unto truth;" but Matthew, instead of truth, puts victory.

Judgment is taken several ways. For,

1. Wisdom: "The Lord will wait that he may be gracious, for the Lord is a God of judgment," Isa. xxx. 18. that is, of wisdom to give in the most convenient season.

2. Righteousness: "Judgment is far from us, neither doth justice overtake us," Isa. lix. 9; that is, there is no holiness in us.

3. Overthrow of a christian's enemy: "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out," John xii. 31; now shall the devil be conquered, "He shall bring forth judgment unto truth:" Isa. xlii. 3. that is, he shall govern in righteousness. Now Christ's government being chiefly in the souls of men, he shall assist and encourage that which is the better; as governors ought to be encouragers of the good, and discouragers of the bad. Matthew explains this, and shows the consequence of this government; if it be in truth, it will make the better part victorious. Some by judgment understand the gospel, the new evangelical law: "The isles shall wait for his law," ver. 4 So Christ will not rest till he makes the gospel glorious, and advances it in the world above the lusts and idolatries of men, which then overflowed the world. Some by judgment understand grace, which is the draught and copy of the gospel drawn in the soul; and both those senses the words

will bear; the words in Isaiah seem to bear the first sense, "The isles shall wait for his law." The other seems most consonant to Matthew, "and in his name shall the Gentiles trust;" that is, he will make their faith victorious, the effect of this judgment, or evangelical law should be the victoriousness of grace and faith. Implanting grace in the heart is the main design of the gospel; and grace is nothing else but a moulding the soul into the form of that law and doctrine of Christ; as Christ will make the gospel glorious, above all the carnal reasonings of men, so he will make grace, which is the end of the gospel, victorious above all the corruptions of men. In this latter sense we shall now handle it, Christ shall make those beginnings of grace and infused habits, to obtain a perfect conquest. By his governing of it, he shall make the conquest over corruption perfect.

DOCTRINE. TRUE, THOUGH WEAK GRACE SHALL BE PRESERVED, AND IN THE END PROVE VICTORIOUS.

Seeds of grace, though mixed with a mass of corruption, cannot be overcome by it: as gold cannot be altered in its nature by the dross, or transformed into the nature of the rubbish in which it lies. Grace is surely weakest at the first infusion, when it is newly landed in the heart from heaven, when the devil and the wickedness of man's nature have taken the alarm, and drawn together all the armies of hell to hinder its progress; yet though it be thus, in so weak a condition, indisposed to make a stout resistance, having got but little footing in the heart, and a man's own inclinations not well reconciled to it, nor his evil apprehensions and notions fully exterminated, and the predominant corruptions that held the empire before, having

received but their first wound, and being much unmortified, and grace also as yet but in a strange soil, not naturalized at all;—yet is grace then so strong, that all the legions of hell cannot totally worst it; though it be like a grain of mustard-seed newly sown, yet it springs up into a mighty tree: for as the weakness of God is stronger than men, so is the weakness of grace stronger than sin in the event and issue. The meanest grace is above the highest intellectual parts, as the smile of a sun-beam is more powerful to chase away the grim and sour darkness of the night, than the sparkling of a diamond. According to the degrees of its growth, its effects are wonderful; as a small spark, by a breath of wind growing into a flame, may fire and consume a spacious and stately building. The weakest grace by degrees shall have strength: "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David," Zech. xii. 8. which is meant of the Jews' strength at their conversion. David was a mighty man of valour, and when a stripling, laid Goliath in the dust; but in the strength of Christ: for the "House of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before him," that is, Christ that descended from David. In the text you see God assures us, that Christ shall perform this; therefore let us see what engagements are on God's part, and what also on Christ's part to effect this business, which will be sufficient demonstrations of this truth.

In general. Grace hath great allies; the greatest power that ever yet acted upon the stage of the world, had a hand in the birth of it: should we see all the states of the world engaged in bringing a person to a kingdom, and maintaining him there in his right, we could not rationally think that

there were any likelihood they should be baffled in it.

The Trinity sat in consultation about grace; for if there were such a solemn convention held about the first creating of man, Gen. i. 26. much more about the new and better creating of him, and raising him somewhat above the state of a man. The Father decrees it, Christ purchaseth it, the Spirit infuseth it; the Father appoints the garrison, what grace shall be in every soul, Christ raiseth this force, and the Spirit conducts it. The Trinity have a hand in maintaining it; the Father purgeth out corruption, the Son washes, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies; all this is but the carrying on the new creature: "But after the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, not by works of righteousness," &c. "but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Tit. iii. 4--6, "God our Saviour," that is, God the Father, the Father is the author of salvation from sin, Christ the purchaser, the Spirit the conveyer. There is a special relation between the Trinity and grace: the Father is said to beget us, John i. 13; and we are said to be the seed of Christ, Isa. liii. 10; and born of the Spirit, John iii. 6; that therefore which hath so strong a relation, cannot perish.

I. The Father, who is the first root of grace in his good will and pleasure. Though Christ merited the fruits of election, yet he did not merit election itself, for Christ himself is a fruit of that first election.

God's attributes are engaged. Grace will engage God's assistance. Every grace is part of the

Divine nature, because it is an imitation of one or other of the Divine attributes, and exemplifies the Divine perfections in its operations: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. Show forth the praise of God, ἀρετὰς, the *virtues* of God. Grace in all the parts of it doth glorify one or other attribute of God; humility his power, contentedness his sufficiency, watchfulness his omniscience, prayer his sovereignty, repentance and sorrow for sin his justice, faith his love and truth; a fiduciary reliance on his word, his wisdom, &c.

1. The love of God is engaged in it. The riches of his grace was the motive to work grace in the heart. Goodness made him bring light into the world, and it is the same motive makes him bring grace into the soul. It is called God's workmanship, his poem, Eph. ii. 10. ποίημα, about which he spent more skill than about all other things. As usually men are more lofty in a poem than in prose, and enrich it with the sublimest fancies, and diligently observe their numbers and measures; so is God exact in the production of the new creature, which is rather his ποίημα than ἔργον, as if it were not so much the work of his hands, as the work of his heart; for as his soul was pleased in Christ, (Matt. xii. 18.) so in all things which make to the glory of Christ. "His soul:" it denotes a high joy which we find not expressed of the creation; and therefore his heart is chiefly set upon grace, as that which he chiefly designed Christ to purchase, and Christ to implant.

Well then, did God's love give his Son to die for

thee, to purchase that grace? And will not the same love engage his power to preserve and perfect that grace? Shall his common love to his creatures cause him to provide for sparrows, and will he neglect his children? Shall he provide for his children, and not stand by to second that which gives them the denomination of children? Shall their hairs be numbered, and not one fall to the ground without the will of God? Hairs, I say, which are inconsiderable, of which there is no miss, no endangering of life by their fall; and shall grace be thrown to the ground by corruption, which brings down with it the life and happiness of a christian and the glory of God? No, the weakest grace hath a certain interest in the love of God, because the weakest is the birth of that love; as the child that is crying in the cradle, is as much related to the father, as the son stoutly working in the shop.

2. The power of God. It is not in a bare moral, but physical way, that grace is brought into the soul. If power must be employed in raising the body, less surely will not serve to raise the soul, which is a far more noble and excellent work. Can it be possibly thought, that when Satan, the strong man, had possession of the soul, well provided for defence, had a great interest in the affections and love of a man, making no laws, enjoining no commands but what were suitable and pleasant to flesh and blood, that ever grace of itself could have dispossessed him, and wrested this empire out of his hands? Surely it must be the power of God that did it, else so strong an enemy, so mighty a prince could never have been overcome, so well beloved a governor could never have been over-

thrown. God is the strength of the soul; all the contrivances and stratagems against the flesh are from him: "Our sufficiency is of God: we are not sufficient of ourselves, λογίσασθαι, to think," 2 Cor. iii. 5; that is, to come to some certain resolution, as men do when they sum up their particular accounts, or state their own affairs; and when this is done, we cannot will it, or put it in execution without him; therefore, "He works in us both to will and to do, and that of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 13. ἐνδοκιας, love and power is put together. It would be derogatory to God, if that should be totally overcome, which his immediate power is the cause of, put on by his special love; for it would either argue a want of love, or a want of sufficiency to maintain it: but it is not thus; for the same power which brought us to God, keeps us from being drawn from him: If "kept by the power of God through faith," 1 Pet. i. 5, then that faith is also kept by the power of God; that faith whereby we overcome the invasions of Satan, and repel his fiery darts; that faith whereby the corruptions of the heart are resisted and expelled by its purifying act; for faith purifies the heart instrumentally, Acts xv. 9.

3. The holiness of God. Men are said to be like God, not in power, infiniteness, omniscience, &c. but in holiness, which is the attribute most extolled in heaven, Isa. vi. 3. an attribute which God doth most magnify, as swearing by it, Psa. lxxxix. 35. which he doth not particularly and expressly by any other attribute; an attribute which he is so tender of: for what is the cause of that justice which employs his power in punishing offenders, but his holiness and hatred of sin?

Grace hath its print from God, and is conformity to the holiness of God, as appearing in his law. It is the image of God, there is a harmony and proportion of all graces in the soul to those perfections of holiness which are in God, as there is of the members of the body of a child to its father; in respect of this likeness men are said to be the children of God. It might better be said of grace, than it was said of the soul by the heathen, that it was "a spark of the Divine essence," or as the Jews say: "Souls were the shavings or chips of the throne of glory." Graces are the drops of God's perfections, they are so exact an image of him. In respect of this likeness to God's holiness, gracious souls that have escaped the corruptions of the world through lust, do partake of the Divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. It is called a bearing the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 48. Not that God bestows any thing of the Divine essence upon the soul, but an image and representation of himself, just as a golden seal conveys to the wax the image engraven on it, but not the least particle of its matter, the wax remaining wax, though under another form and figure. This likeness is a likeness to God in his highest perfection, namely his holiness, which runs through all, and may be applied to all the attributes, as holy power, &c. and herein grace excels the perfections of the whole creation put together, for all the creatures are not so like to God as grace makes the soul. And how can we imagine any thing, wherein we can be more like to God, than in that which is the highest excellency, and perfection of God? Now, seeing grace hath so near a relation to God, and God doth so delight to see this in his people, that all his end is to make

them like him, in a completing of holiness in them in heaven, and that this is that which Christ must do at the last, present them holy and blameless without any spot; will he neglect that which is so dear and like to him? and suffer his own image to be wholly crushed under feet by corruption, his basest enemy?

4. The wisdom of God. The weakest grace is the birth of his eternal counsel: He has chosen us that we might be holy, Eph. i. 4. If thou hast any grace, though ever so mean, thou wert from eternity given by God to Christ, and Christ purchased this grace for thee, else the Spirit would never have infused it into thee, for the Spirit receives of Christ and shows it unto you; there was a decree passed in heaven for all that grace thou hast. Therefore that which made God at first resolve upon it, and made him send such a force and brigade into thy soul, will cause him to perfect it to a complete victory: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6. The apostle was confident that because God had begun it, he would perfect it; what ground should he have for this confidence, if weak grace could be totally overcome? God being unchangeable in his counsels and decrees, if any saint whom he hath purposed to save, should be totally drawn from him, it would argue God changeable, that his will was altered, or weak, that his power was extinguished, or unwise, that his counsel was rashly undertaken. But surely his love being founded upon his counsel, admits of no change. Besides, God doth infuse grace into those souls which are naturally and morally most

incapable of it. The most rugged pieces he smooths, the darkest souls he enlightens, the greatest enemies he makes friends, and would he begin this work to have it presently spoiled? God before he meddled with any soul, foresaw what contests and conflicts of sin and the devil there would be against him; he counted all the cost and charges, and all the pains he was to take. And it doth not consist with the wisdom of God to lay aside his undertaking, nor with the patience of God not to endure the brunt, when he foresaw every stratagem of the devil against such a soul when he first set up the standard in it. The gospel is called the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10. And surely all the effects of it, and this of grace in the heart, which is the chief effect and design of it, is an act of God's wisdom; and should this which is the birth of his manifold wisdom be suppressed?

5. The glory of God. God's end in every thing is his glory, and that which grace aims at is the glory of God. As God minds himself and wills himself the chief good, so doth grace mind and will God as the choicest and supreme happiness. Those graces which maintain the hottest fight against corruption, and are the strongest and most active legion, have a peculiar objective relation to God, as love to him, faith in him, desire for him; those graces which are exercised about man, and the duties of the second table, have not so great an interest in this quarrel. Now is it for the honour of God, to let that which is his best friend in the world be totally suppressed? Would not his honour suffer in it? The two sisters thought it a good argument to prevail with Christ to come and help Lazarus when they sent him word, "He whom

thou lovest is sick;" and Christ himself took an argument from his friendship to raise him: "Our friend Lazarus sleeps." And is it not as good an argument with God to come in for relief of languishing grace, when you send him word how hard it is beset?

II. Christ is engaged in this work. The promise in the text manifests that Christ was engaged by his Father to it, his Father having promised it upon his proclaiming him his chosen Servant.

Christ is engaged as,

1. A purchaser. He died to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Inward works as well as outward, Tit. ii. 14. He gave himself that we might be without filth, and at last without spot, wrinkle, or blemish: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church," Eph. v. 25—27, not an imperfect church; not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; any thing like them; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. To sanctify or cleanse by degrees, to perfect it by wiping out all the spots, and smoothing the wrinkles, and making it highly beautiful, fit to be presented to himself as his eternal spouse. If these spots and blemishes should keep their standing, it would argue, that it was not Christ's purpose in the giving himself to remove them; or that this gift was not equivalent to so great an end, and sufficient to attain it; or else that he hath since repented of his intent; but none of those will hold; this scripture assures us, he gave himself for this purpose; the Father hath

exalted him at his right hand for it, and his compassions work powerfully in his bowels even in heaven; he was of the same mind after his ascension, when Paul wrote this epistle. Therefore he is said, by one offering, to perfect for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14; that is, that one offering was of such infinite value, that it perfectly purchased the taking away of sin, both in the guilt, filth, and power, and was a sufficient price for all the grace believers should need for their perfect sanctification to the end of the world. There was the satisfaction of his blood for the removal of our guilt, and a treasure of merit for the supply of our grace. Though glory was due to him, even from the moment of his incarnation, as he was the Son of God, yet he would not enter into it, and sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, till he had purchased grace and all the measures of it for his people, and that by himself, by the laying down his life as the price for it: "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," Heb. i. 3. Sat down—when? Not till he had purged, that is, made atonement for our sins, and paid for whatsoever holiness or purging grace his people should want. His blood was so valuable, that the treasures of God were dealt out to believers, before his coming, upon the credit of his bond; much more will they be so after his coming, upon God's actual receipt of the price, and our Saviour's sitting down at the right hand of God, to see the grace he purchased given out. Upon this account Christ hath a care of the weakest saint as well as of the most glorious angel, because he died to purchase the weakest believer, not the highest angel, who stood in no need of it; if Christ

bought us, we belong to the purchaser, which is the apostle's inference: "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price," 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Not our own governors, not our own keepers. The possession the Holy Ghost hath of us making us his temples, is by virtue of this price. If Christ died, that his people might have grace, and that it might be powerful, shall lust trample upon that which Christ hath so dearly bought? Was it a light thing, for which he endured all the torments upon the cross, and will he now make no matter of it? If he purchased us, and grace for us when we were enemies, will he not preserve it in us, since we are his friends? Shall he be at the expense of his richest blood to buy it, and spare his power to secure it? Is the right of his purchase of so low a value with him, as to suffer it to be usurped by his greatest enemy?

2. An actual proprietor and possessor by way of,

(1.) Donation from his Father. Every believer is God's gift to Christ as Mediator, for this end, to give eternal life to them, and every one of them: That I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me, John xvii. 2; which eternal life, is the knowledge of God, which includes all grace. And they were given to him that they might be perfect; one, as the Father and the Son are: "Keep through thy own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are," John xvii. 11. He gave them with an intent that they should be one in as high a manner as the creature is capable of; this was the end both of God's giving and Christ's keeping; for the particle ἵνα may refer to keep, or to given. If they be not at last one, the end of God's giving must be

frustrate, and the petition of Christ not heard. Christ will not undervalue his Father's gift. We prize even small tokens from a friend we love. Because our Redeemer valued this gift, he accepted of it, and took it into his own possession. And because he loves his Father, he will answer the ends of this donation. Christ calls those his sheep by virtue of this donation, John x. 16. Our being his sheep, by virtue of this gift, will be as much a reason to preserve us in faith, as it was at first to confer it on us. The same reason is as valid for preserving as for first conferring, and that is the Father's gift.

(2.) He is proprietor and possessor by the conquest of every gracious person, and whatsoever was contrary to grace. As our Redeemer was to purchase us by his death at the hand of God's justice, so he was to rescue us by his power from the fury of our hellish oppressor. As he was to appease the justice of God, so he was to deface the works of the devil: "He was manifested to take away our sins," 1 John iii. 5. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," ver. 8. As God's justice is so perfectly pacified as never to renew the curses of the law against a believer, so is the devil so thoroughly subdued as never to repair the ruins of his works. Did Christ rise as a conqueror out of the grave to let sin and Satan run away with the fruits of his victory? Shall he overcome the powers of hell, and triumph over them, to let the devil rob him of the honour of his achievements by regaining his loss? Shall that man of his right hand, whom God hath made strong for himself, that we might not go back from him, Psa. lxxx. 17, be made

weak again by man's own corruptions and the devil's repossession? Should grace truckle under the devil's works, and the standard which was set up in the soul when it was first snatched from the power of darkness, be pulled down, what would become of the glory of our Redeemer's death, and the honour of his victory? What a disparagement would it be, to have that which he paid so great a price for, which was the special gift of his Father, the acquisition of the travail and sweat of his soul, wrested out of his hand by an enemy he hath subdued, condemned upon the cross, and triumphed over at his ascension! No; this will never be. Christ and the Father are one in operation; and whom God delivers from the power of darkness, he translates into the kingdom of his dear Son; not to return under the government of a hated devil; and makes them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12, 13. not to be partakers of the inheritance of the devils in darkness. Neither the Father nor the Son will lose the fruit of their pains.

(3.) By mutual consent and agreement. He hath possession of them by God's gift, and their own choice: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," John x. 27, 28. Believers are his sheep in his hand, he knows them with a knowledge of affection, and therefore will be careful of their feeding, growth, and safety. On the other side, they hear his voice, answer his call, and believe in him, and own him for their Lord and Proprietor. They follow him, he calls them; they hear his voice, he

knows them; they follow him, he gives unto them eternal life; a life never to perish, either by their own wills, or the wolves' violence. Against both those, Christ in this promise as their Owner, secures them. Against their corruptions, they shall not perish, namely, by a corruptive principle in themselves: here he removes from them all inward causes of destruction. Against outward violence, neither shall any man, no nor devil, pluck them out of my hands, ἅτις. By this promise he holds us safe in his own possession against the encroachments of our lusts and the rapine of the devil. They choose him for their guardian, and cast all their care upon him, and follow his conduct; and he takes care of them to give them eternal life, and to mind the weakest as well as the strongest of his sheep. He hath them in his hand. They apprehend him, and are apprehended by him, that they may attain the same end of the race with him, the resurrection of the dead, namely, a state of perfection: "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may (καταλαβῶ) lay hold of that for which" [for which end] "I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," Phil. iii. 12. Apprehended, or laid hold on by Christ, a metaphor from those that run a race, that take hold of another to draw him after to win a prize as well as themselves. Christ lays hold on believers, and they follow him. Will Christ be easily persuaded to let go the hold of his own right? will he throw them out of his hand? That would be changeableness, and unfaithfulness after his promise. Shall any pluck them out of his hand? That would be weakness. Faith cleaves

to Christ, and Christ to faith. Faith hands Christ into the heart, and gives him possession; Christ takes the heart as his own property: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 17; and engageth himself by promise that both he and his Father shall abide there, John xiv. 23. Will any gracious heart cast Christ out of his lodging? He that knows the sweetness of their company, can never desire to have their room. Doth Christ dwell in the heart to let sin pull his house down about his ears? Will he suffer the devil to bring in hell-fire to burn up his dwelling? It is his own house, the church and every member of it, Heb. iii. 6. Will he not hinder the decays of it, and repair the beams and walls? Yea, the very tiles and pins? Shall he not brush down the cobwebs, and sweep out the dust? The heart is his field; will he not gather in his wheat, and burn up the tares at last?

3. Christ is a steward and officer, appointed by God to this purpose, to take care of every believer, and his grace. How is he the "surety of the covenant," and of "a better testament?" Heb. vii. 22. How can it be a better testament, if it may be broken, and prove as weak as the first? He is bound for the performance of the articles of it, whereof those are the two standing parts of this agreement: "I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40. that God will not turn away from us to do us good, and that we shall never depart from him; and our perpetual cleaving to him doth depend upon his putting his fear into our hearts, and is the end of it. This never departing is the end why God puts his

fear into our hearts: and Christ being a surety of this testament, is to look to both parts of it, that both what concerns God's part, and what concerns ours, may be made good.

Here it is to be considered, that,

(1.) Christ had a charge from the Father to this purpose.

He had a charge concerning what he was to do for them. He had a charge to redeem them, and a charge to govern them; he hath a charge to relieve them, and a charge to perfect them.

[1.] He had a charge to redeem them. The copy of it you may see: "That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth: to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves," Isa. xlix. 9: he was to call them out of their prisons, knock off their fetters, bring them out of darkness into a marvellous light.

[2.] To be their governor, was as much in his commission, as to be their Redeemer; for, "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of waters shall he guide them," ver. 10. So also in Isa. iv. 6, where by heat, &c. is meant all troubles and inconveniences in a christian life. They should not be wasted by fiery temptations, nor left in a forlorn condition. And the reason is, because Christ, that Holy One, to whom God speaks, ver. 7. that Redeemer who called them out of a state of darkness and captivity, was to lead them in his hand, and have his eye upon them, and guide them by the springs of water, that they might have a fulness of the Spirit, and all refreshings and supplies of grace necessary for their present condition. By water alluding to the river out of the rock, which

followed the Israelites in the wilderness; and by the heat and sun, to the fiery serpents, and the plague at that time. Christ here had the conduct of those redeemed captives committed to him, and was not to rest satisfied with conferring the first grace in the conversion of them, but to provide all things for their future security as well as their present freedom. And Isa. xlii. 1—3. when God proclaimed him his Servant, this was in his commission, to have a special care of the bruised as well as the standing reed; of the smoking as well as the flaming flax; of the infant grace as well as the adult; and indeed the charge is chiefly for them.

[3.] He hath a charge to receive them: "All that the Father gives me, shall come to me; and him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37. "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me," ver. 38. He was in no wise to cast them out; that is, he was affectionately to entertain and welcome them. And that he might make it as firm as possibly could be, he tells us it was not only his will, but his office, and that he was under a necessary as well as voluntary obedience to his Father in this case. It was a part of God's will and charge to him upon the sending him into the world, to receive very kindly any that come to him, though the most feeble and crippled believers, that came upon crutches. As he was to receive kindly those that came, so it implies, that he should receive them as often as they came; and that in any exercises of faith they should find fresh welcomes. Though their faith were very feeble, it should not be denied entertainment, but be highly caressed. So that Christ was ordered here to

entertain every comer, as well as to die for them; and charged upon his obedience not to discountenance any that come, come when they will, and as often as they will.

[4.] He hath a charge also to perfect them; not to lose one of those God hath given him: τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πεμψαντός με πατρὸς; "that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day," John vi. 39. This is my Father's absolute and immutable will, and he hath sent me to perform this will, that of every person he hath given, μὴ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτῶν, lose nothing of it, not the meanest, weakest person, not one mite or grain of grace should be lost, but I should raise it up all at the last day. It was not the bare raising up, that was the charge God gave unto Christ, but the raising up to eternal life, ver. 40. With that perfection of holiness and grace which God expects as the end of all his dispensations; otherwise it cannot be a raising up to eternal life in such a completeness as God intended in his charge. This charge not to lose any, but to raise them up fit to be presented unto God, without blemish, doth include all means and methods in subserviency to this end. And in this charge they are all implied to be looked after by Christ. Christ would be no friend to his Father, should he slight his Father's orders. If he should fail of being a perfect Saviour, where would be his love and obedience to God? It is as impossible for an elect person to perish, as it is for Christ, who is one with the Father, to act contrary to his Father's will. For since they are given to him, and that on purpose to receive eternal life by him, they must be preserved; and all that which prepares them to be

vessels of glory, must be secured from a total and final miscarriage, or else Christ breaks his trust, disobeys his Father, and frustrates his expectations of a rest and satisfaction in him.

This charge Christ must give an account of. Officers are to give an account of the management of the trust reposed in them; so is Christ of every believer's soul. Our Saviour is in several places called God's Servant; servants are to give an account to those that employ them; and it is part of the faithfulness of a servant so to do; and Christ's faithfulness is to be glorified. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest, Heb. ii. 17. faithful to God, as well as merciful to us, and faithful to God in being merciful to us; and by giving account of his mercy to us, he gives an account of his faithfulness to God. God expects all to be returned to him in that perfection and conformity to Christ, which he designed, when he first made the deed of gift of them to Christ. He will see whether a man be lost, by comparing the number of his sanctified ones with the names written in the book of life. Some model of this account we have: "Behold I, and the children which thou hast given me," Heb. ii. 13. When he shall deliver up his charge, and all be numbered, he will tell his Father of the faith of his people, as he did John xvii. 6—8: Thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. They have received the words which thou gavest me, and they have believed that thou didst send me. This is the confession he will make of men before God and his angels, when he delivers up the kingdom to his Father. Will Christ be found tardy in his accounts? What could he answer, if any one, given to him, should be missing? How could

he say, he hath kept them in his Father's name, and lost none, if any should miscarry? as he did John xvii. 12, which is a copy of what will be said at the last.

(2.) As he hath a charge, so there is a power conferred on him to perform that charge.

He hath a power of *authority*. He hath a power over death and hell to this end: "Fear not, I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death," Rev. i. 17, 18. The giving the key is a mark of authority, and is a ceremony used in investitures into office. Christ hath the keys of death and hell delivered to him by God, and he hath them to prevent the fears and unbelief of his people; for such a use he makes of them here: "Fear not." By "hell" and "death" are meant all kinds of evils which were the bitter consequents of sin. Sin opened the mouth of death, and the gates of hell; they are the only things which can possibly prevail against a believer to hurt him. Will not Christ keep those fast locked up, never to send them out upon a believer for his destruction? And if Christ hath the keys of hell and death, he hath also power to keep his people from that state which will necessarily run them into hell and death. All the power Christ hath given him over all flesh, is in subserviency to the performing this charge: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, ἐξουσίαν," John xvii. 2. Not only a power over those given to him, to give them eternal life, but a power over all flesh, all the corruptions of men and devils, in order to this end of giving eternal life to every believer, to as many

as God hath given him; so that there is not one believer, no not the weakest, but all the power God hath put into the hands of Christ over all flesh, is with a design that it should be used for his security. As if God should say, Son, look to it; that no one whom I have given to thee, miss of eternal life, since I have given thee power over all flesh for their sakes, see that no sinful or natural flesh deprive them of this life; for I have granted thee the power for this purpose. Will Christ be unfaithful not to exercise his power to the right end? No; much less will he abuse his power over all flesh to an end quite contrary to that for which it was given him. And Christ doth so exercise his power; for those righteous judgments and just reproofs of men in the world, they are for the sake of the meek of the earth: "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth," Isa. xi. 4.

Also he has a power of *ability*. Christ had the Spirit upon him, to bring forth judgment to the gentiles, and judgment unto truth, or unto victory, Isa. xlii. 4. This rich deposit, his jewels, laid up in the hand of Christ, are more highly valued by God than to be intrusted with a weak and feeble keeper.

Ability in respect of,

[1.] Strength to lay the foundation of our security. God made him strong for himself for attaining the ends he proposed: "Let thy hand be upon the Man of thy right hand: upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself. So will not we go back from thee," Psa. lxxx. 17. The death and mediation of Christ is the strongest preservation against apostasy: God made Christ

strong for his own glory, to purchase a people that should keep their standing with Him, and not fall as Adam did. The effect of the hand of God being upon Christ, and the strength he had to go through in his work, was to keep his people's wills and hearts close to God. This is the issue and inference the psalmist makes of it. What might in Adam's or in angels' hands miscarry, never shall in his.

[2.] Assistance in this business to hold his people secure. Though God gave them to Christ as his charge, yet not wholly to leave them in Christ's hands, and take no care of them himself. Though they were safe enough in Christ's hands, yet the Father to show his care of them, and tenderness towards them, would have the keeping of them too; and would have fast hold as well as his Son, to assist his Son in it: "My Father which gave them me, is greater than all," (greater than Christ in his office of mediation,) "and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one," John x. 29, 30. God would have his hand upon them to assist Christ in it, to give him the highest security for their happiness: "I and my Father are one;" one in resolution, affection, power, ability, and consent in this business; one in holding of my sheep; we both have our hands upon them. It would be strange that any should perish, who are grasped both by the Father and the Son. What power is able to do it, since the Father is greater than all, all men and devils, corruptions and temptations, and falls in with his greatest assistance to enable Christ in this business?

[3.] Of knowledge and wisdom. He is the

wisdom of the Father; in him are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for the advantage of those persons designed in his commission. The all-wise God would never have put so great a concern as his own glory in his people's security, into unskilful hands, and have disparaged his own wisdom in the choice of an unfit steward. He hath the book of God's decrees delivered to him, therefore called the Lamb's book of life, and there he finds every name written, Rev. xxi. 27, and he hath their names written in heaven before him: "to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven," Heb. xii. 23. There is a commerce between Christ and his Spirit, so that by the Spirit he knows the state of every believer; their offices depend one upon another; Christ is the treasurer of grace, the Spirit the conveyer of it; he receives of Christ's, and shows it unto us; Christ knows what goes out, and he knows to whom the Spirit hands it; knows the mind of the Spirit; he searches and listens to know the Spirit's mind, what it would have, what is fit to give to the soul. The Spirit intercedes in us, Christ intercedes for us; Christ knows the voice and mind of his own Spirit, and the Spirit knows the will of our Redeemer; for, "He makes intercessions for us according to the will of God," Rom. viii. 27. So he cannot but know our state, because he hath a faithful intelligencer, the same that is our faithful Comforter, and watcheth over us to take care of us. The catalogue of the gifts he had is reckoned up, Isa. xi. 2: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

All his wisdom, and knowledge, and counsel, and understanding, are managed by the fear of the Lord, which is put last, as that which is the end of all the rest, namely, faithfulness to God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom in us, and the top of wisdom in Christ: his wisdom and knowledge is to fit him for his faithfulness, as ver. 2: "And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," in all the methods of obedience to his charge; and God gave him the "tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to them that are weary," Isa. l. 4, that is, who are weary under sin, and apprehensions of wrath, and power of corruptions. The wisdom God gives him is principally for this end.

[4.] The sufficiency of treasure for it. Christ hath a ministerial fulness to this end; "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. i. 19. The issues of this fulness are our reconciliation to God, and the presenting us holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in God's sight, that is, in such a state that his infinitely pure eye shall find no fault in us, ver. 20—22. These are the effects of this fulness, and therefore are the end. Though the condition be put in: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled," ver. 23. it doth not signify that our continuance in faith depends upon our own wills. It is frequent in scripture to put into promises those conditions which in other places are promised to be wrought in us: so that all those promises of life upon our continuing and holding out to the end, do not weaken this, that our preservation is the effect of this fulness, because those conditions are promised in other

places, and are parts of the covenant of grace, for the performance of which this fulness was given to our Saviour. Our completeness and perfection depend upon that fulness of the Godhead which dwells in him bodily: "For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9, 10. It is a ministerial fulness, whereby he is made sanctification to us as well as righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. He is made to us sanctification, and as much sanctification, and as perfect sanctification, as righteousness, or wisdom, or redemption; so that if any of those be perfect, as our righteousness and redemption, our sanctification also shall be perfect, though it be ever so weak at present. The oil first poured upon Christ's head, as well as that upon Aaron the type, runs down to the skirts of his garments, and anoints all the other members; God poured out this grace first upon Christ, and through him upon all believers. There is as much a dependence of the grace in our hearts, not only in its birth, but in its continuance, upon this fulness of grace in Christ, as there is of light in the moon or air upon that in the sun; and there is a constant efflux of it from him to expel the darkness of sin, as there is of light from the sun to conquer the darkness in the air. And indeed were it not maintained by a constant influence of Christ's fulness, we should quickly have no more grace left, than Adam just after his fall, and should prove as very bankrupts as the worst of sinners. The sun is not able to dry up a drop of sea-water that lies in the midst of the sand, which the sea every minute rolls upon, and preserves; neither can the flesh the least grace, while the fulness of Christ flows out upon it to supply it.

[5.] The perpetuity of this office. The continuance of Christ for ever in an unchangeable priesthood, makes him able to save to the uttermost in spite of all men and devils: "But this man, because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood: wherefore he is able," &c. Heb. vii. 24, 25. If he continues for ever in this office, he will then be for ever able to perform the business pertaining to the office, which is to save to the utmost, perfectly, from all kind of sins and corruptions, though ever so powerful: none can deprive him of his office, because none can deprive him of his life. God neither can nor will, because he hath consecrated him by an oath to be a priest or officer upon this account for ever. And this office being conferred upon him on purpose for the salvation of believers, the ends and effects of this office are of as long a continuance as the office itself: for if Christ did not perform the end of his office, it would be but an empty title: and this life which is for ever, Christ doth intend to use for the standing and perfection of the weakest grace; so that as long as that endures, the grace and happiness of a christian stands immovable. "Because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19; you shall live a spiritual life here, and an eternal life hereafter; all my life shall be employed for you, to communicate a gracious life to you, and preserve it in you, till it come to be swallowed up in a life of glory with me for ever. If the spring of Christ's life fail, then and not till then may the stream of ours; grace cannot be destroyed while Christ's life is continued, which will be for ever: "I am alive for evermore," Rev. i. 18. A creature under the full beams of the sun, cannot be

cold, till the light and heat of the sun are extinguished.

[6.] Honour. By this God encourageth Christ in this business; Christ hath his honour to this end. Places of trust among men, are places of honour. Will Christ be careless of his own happiness and glory? He was exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sin, Acts v. 31. The grace of repentance is only mentioned, but by consequence all the rest which accompany remission of sins, are intended. What was the reason he had so great a glory conferred upon him? Because he loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, Heb. i. 9. Psa. xlv. 7. Because he manifested this love and hatred, by vindicating the righteousness of God, and setting up an everlasting righteousness, and taking away iniquity. Now this disposition of loving righteousness, and hating iniquity, must needs be as powerful in him in heaven, as it was before: nay he must needs love this disposition the better, which was the cause of so great an exaltation. And if this disposition was the reason of his advancement, should this disposition languish in him, his very advancement would decay with it. If it were the reason why he was exalted, it must then follow, that he was exalted that he might still love righteousness, and hate iniquity; for this end, for the exercise of this he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Since therefore this affection continues in him, is it possible he should endure to see that iniquity which he hates, prevail over that righteousness which he loves, after he hath planted one in the heart, and subdued the other? The apostle prays, that God would fulfil the work of faith with power; "that the name of

our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you," 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. The name of Christ is glorified in a believer, when the work of faith is fulfilled with power. It makes his crown shine the brighter. What hopes then have the devil and corruption, of ever regaining their former standing in a believing soul? None, till the glory of Christ become vile in his own eyes.

(3.) As there is a charge and office given by God to Christ, and an ability to perform, so there is a compliance of Christ with it; which appears—

In his *faithfulness* in the discharge of it to this end. He promiseth this; he promised it to his Father in their agreement, else he had never been sent. He promises it to us. In John vi. 39, there is God's charge to him, that he should lose nothing of what he had given to him, but raise it up. In ver. 40, there is his own absolute promise: "I will raise them up at the last day," that is, every believer; where he engageth himself to be faithful in the performance of God's will. He hath given a full evidence of it already, in finishing the work God gave him to do upon the earth: "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," John xvii. 4. For he appeals to God for his faithfulness in this particular. And he will be no less faithful in finishing the work, which is to be yet done by him in heaven, in the behalf of his people, and their graces; for such a work he hath to do: A finisher of faith, in his sitting at God's right hand, Heb. xii. 2. His faithful care extends to all his subjects, even the weakest, as well as the highest believer, as God's providence doth to every creature, the lowest worm, as well as the highest angel. They are all

one in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, Gal. iii. 8. They are all one to him, for he is faithful in the exercise of his office to every one.

Christ's compliance in his *affection* (and that a strong one) to this office, besides his faithfulness, such as,

[1.] His stirring compassions to weak grace. These were great in him before the assumption of our nature: "I will send an angel before thee, for I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the way," Exod. xxxiii. 2, 3. They will give me so many provocations, that it shall be as a consuming fire; as God must needs be in a way of justice, when he treats with a sinful people himself. But I will send an angel; what angel was this? It is called his presence, ver. 14. Isaiah puts them both together, Isa. lxiii. 9, and calls him the angel of God's presence or face. Jesus Christ the messenger of his favour; he shall go up, for he hath compassion; therefore it is said: "In his pity he redeemed them," Isa. lxiii. 9. The antithesis doth easily manifest this sense. He shall go up with thee, and he shall not consume thee, though thou art a stiff-necked people, because he is Mediator, and hath undertaken to satisfy my consuming justice, and being designed by assuming of your nature to be akin to you, hath great compassion towards that nature, his delights are among the sons of men. For God here is considered as a Judge, and the angel of his presence as a Mediator. The government of them by Christ, is here appointed for their security, which they could not have under the immediate government of God. His compassions are in some sense greater now than they were then,

since he hath been made like unto us, and compassed with our infirmities, and hath learned obedience (the necessity of obedience to the mediatorial law) by the things which he suffered. Infirmity is the object of compassion, and the more pressing the infirmity is, the more stirring is the pity. As God pities men the more, when he remembers they are but dust, and knows their frame, Psa. ciii. 13, 14. So doth Christ know thy frame, thy believing frame, how weak it is; thy sinful frame, how strong it is; he knows thy enemies, and he knows thy indigence, and how unprovided thou art of thyself to make a stout resistance; and this awakens his compassion; as the sickly faint child hardly able to go, and not the strong one, is the object of the father's pity. The weaker thy faith, which lies mixed with a world of strong corruptions, the more will Christ be affected with thy case, and pity that grace of his own, which suffers under them; for to this end his heart was stored with compassion to be exercised upon such occasions. He cannot have a greater object of pity, than his own grace at the lowest ebb, nor a fitter opportunity to show what a priest he is, how merciful to man in his misery, how faithful to God in his interest, which was the end of his being clothed with our infirmities, Heb. ii. 17. That very sin which he hates, which is a burden, a grief, a trouble to him, shall rather excite, than damp his compassion. It shall draw out his pity to thy person and thy grace, and his anger only against thy sin. If he hath any compassions in heaven, they are for those that are his own, and for that grace which he loves, when it is shot at by powerful corruptions.

[2.] A choice love to the weakest believers and their grace. The having a seed is the greatest article that he insisted on in his first agreement with God in this mediatorial work. He was satisfied with the promises of it, for all the satisfaction he was to give to God by his blood: "He shall see his seed, and the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," Isa. liii. 10, 11. And in his last prayer, John xvii. he prays more for his people and their graces, than for himself, to show that his seed lay then nearest his heart, and that his soul travailed most with them. And shall that which he had an entire affection for in the first agreement between his Father and himself be slighted now after all his agonies, pains, sweat, and blood to gain it? When he was in the flesh, he admired not the buildings of the temple, had no fondness for the pomp of the world, or the splendour of a prince's court. No. The faith of the centurion was the matter of his wonder. That of a Canaanitish woman, and the penitent love of a converted sinner, the object of his affection. The revelation of God to babes and sucklings, the subject of his thanksgiving. He had more desire to recover a little languishing grace to its former vigour, than to preserve his life. When he was near his sentence of condemnation, he would in that extremity look back upon Peter to inspire him with a new strength after his fall, and by rallying his scattered graces, make him victorious who had been so miserably baffled by his corrupt fears. Would it be correspondent to the sincere love of Christ, to let that which is his special favourite lie grovelling in the dust, wounded to death by sin, his hateful enemy?

[3.] His delight in believers and their graces.

The very first grace acted by a new convert causes a jubilee in heaven. Christ, as it were, makes a feast in heaven when the lost sheep is found, and calls upon all the angels to rejoice with him at the recovery of it. Surely he will never have this joy turned into sorrow, these graces rifled and routed by the devil, and so give him occasion to laugh or scoff both at himself and the angels for their too forward joy. He was glad even of sad occasions contrary to his nature, when they might further the increase of a little faith. When Lazarus was dead, he was glad he was not there in the time of his sickness, to hinder the death of a friend he loved, because by his raising him again, his disciples might be confirmed in faith, and gain a greater power against their frequent doubts and unbelief: "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe," John xi. 15. If Paul calls the Philippians his joy and crown, because he instrumentally converted them, believers then are Christ's joy and crown, because he effectually died for them. Will Christ have his joy torn from his heart, his jewels rifled from his crown, and his crown plucked from his head? What was that joy of his which he desires of his Father to be fulfilled in his disciples, John xvii. 13, but the sanctification of his people, which he prays for? The very discourse of the fruitfulness of his saints' graces cheers his heart: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you," John xv. 11; that is, that I might rejoice in you. He delights in the beauty; that is, the graces of his queen: "So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty," Psa. xlv. 11. And will he not increase his own pleasure by increasing the spiritual beauty

and graces of a believer? He considers believers as his heritage. And can we think he will not improve it? It must be more pleasure to enjoy it flourishing, than to possess it wasted. And Christ doth not repent of any undertaking of his for the happiness and security of his people: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," Hos. xiii. 14. It is the speech of Christ triumphing over death. That it is meant of Christ, the word טרף to redeem with a price, and גאל to redeem by right of relationship, do evince. It includes the conquest of all other enemies, as the apostle descants upon it, 1 Cor. xv. 55—57. Sin and the curse of the law; of this he would not repent; repentance shall be hid from my eyes. I will cast away any motion to it, that it shall never come more in my sight. If he rejoices in this redemption, he will also in the effects of it upon the hearts of his people. These affections are unchangeable as his office. If that be perpetual, Heb. vii. 24. the qualifications necessary to that office must be as perpetual as his office itself. "Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. The same in credit with his Father, faithfulness to his charge, affection to his people, ability for his office, fulness of his person, virtue of his blood, compassions to his weeping, gasping new creature, and his hatred of that which doth oppress it. And when there is such a combination in the heart of Christ, and the end of all is the good of these poor bruised reeds, his believing creatures; can we think it possible

that those affections should be idle? And if they be excited, as undoubtedly they will, they will attain their ends, being all armed with a mighty power for the effecting of them.

Well then, let us act faith upon these engagements of Christ, and say with him in the psalm: "This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide, even unto death," Psa. xlviii. 14, and beyond death too. It is his office to guide by his counsel here, those that he will bring to glory hereafter. Lord Jesus, direct us by thy counsel here as parts of thy charge, and bring us to glory as vessels of thy mercy to be filled with everlasting riches of grace; cherish our bruised reeds, and inflame our smoking flax.

4. Christ is the author of grace. He keeps this treasure in his own hands. He is so choice of it, that he never intrusted an angel to bestow it. Angels were employed to strengthen him both after his temptation and in his agony; they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; but they have not the custody of that which brings them into a state of heirship. He employs none but his Spirit to be his attorney and deputy in the world to this purpose; which Spirit is sent in his name, John xiv. 26. What it bestows, it receives from Christ, and doth it by his order: "He shall glorify me," in doing my work, "for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and show it unto you," John xvi. 14, 15. To his glory, and by communication from him, all the saving light in our understanding, that vital principle in our will, those supernatural impressions

upon our affections, are all handed to us from Christ by the Spirit, and wrought in us by our Redeemer's order. It is all his work by his proxy. The Father is the fountain of grace, Christ the treasurer, the Spirit the dispenser. It was his prerogative to be the author of faith, when he endured the cross and despised the shame: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," Heb. xii. 2, that he might thereby be the author of faith. And he will not lose the other part of his royalty to be the finisher of it, for that is his title too, and he performs this by sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. There he sits upon a throne of grace to distribute grace upon every emergency, to finish that faith which is the weakest, and because it is the weakest, needs most assistance for its relief and perfection, and wants his greatest care for the support of it: "Let us therefore" (that is, because we have not a high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities) "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace," Heb. iv. 15, 16. He gives out mercy from thence for the remission of sin, and dispenseth grace for a seasonable help. It is then most seasonable, when habitual grace is weakest in itself, and its enemy strongest. If he would be the author of faith by his death, because of the joy set before him, he will be no less the finisher of it by his life, because of the joy possessed by him. This being his work since his return to glory, his care to look after both the supporting and completing bruised and imperfect faith, is greater,

because hereby he shows more of his art, (as masters reserve the completing of a work to themselves for the honour of their own skill,) and manifests more of his faithfulness to God, which is more evident in the perfection of a thing, than the first draught of it. And perhaps this may be meant by that expression: "He learned obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," Heb. v. 8, 9. He learned by his sufferings the necessity and the acceptableness of obedience to God in this mediatorial work, and therefore will not be wanting to that part of faithfulness and obedience, which is still due, in being the author of eternal salvation, by his being made perfect in heaven, as he was the author of faith by his being humbled upon the earth. And indeed that grace which he gives is eternal life, for so he calls it, John xvii. 2, 3. What he calls eternal life, which he had power to give, he calls, ver. 3, the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ whom God had sent. The knowledge of God in Christ, a gracious affectionate knowledge of faith, spiritually to know him as sent by God, for such great ends, is faith and eternal life. Though it be but a bud in this world, subject to storms and winds, mixed with much ignorance and many doubts, yet it is life, and eternal life too. For there is no essential difference between grace and glory, but only in degree; therefore Christ saith so frequently in John: "I give unto them eternal life;" I give; not I will give, but I give at present; and he that believes *hath* eternal life, not *shall* have; for grace is a preserving principle, which shall overpower the corruptive principle of sin. If this knowledge

of God in Christ, implanted in the soul, should perish, it cannot then deserve the title Christ gives it. And indeed it is not agreeable to the wisdom of God, and the honour of his Son, to cast about so much, and contrive the sending of Christ, to bestow only a perishing gift, and to let the honour and fruit of his Son's death, his gift of grace, depend upon the mutable will of man.

Well then, to be the author and finisher of faith, are his two titles combined together; and therefore where he is the author, he is engaged to be the finisher of the weakest grace; the smallest star receives its light, and the preservation of it from the sun, as well as that of the greatest magnitude.

5. Christ is the exemplar and pattern of grace. God set up Christ as the great standard or standing copy, according to which all believers should be framed and wrought just like him: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29; to the image of his Son; not to the image of the most glorious man that ever was in the world. Not to Enoch, that signal walker with God, nor Noah, the only loyal preacher of righteousness in his time; nor Abraham, God's friend and the believer's father. But his own Son, who was free from all taint of sin. As his perfect purity made him fit to be a sacrifice to take away sin, 1 John iii. 5; to be an advocate to plead against sin, "Jesus Christ, the righteous," 1 John ii. 1; so also to be the idea according to which all believers should be framed. Now the weakest habitual grace is a begun conformity to Christ as well as the strongest, and as well as that which is perfected in heaven,

and hath in its own nature all the parts of that grace which is in Christ. As an infant in his body hath the lineaments of his father, as well as the grown son: "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," John i. 16. Grace in us suited to that grace which is in Christ, as some well express it; as the paper receives the image of every letter set in the press. The highest believer in the world was not wrought according to a more exact mode, than the lowest. The meanest branch of God's affectionate fore-knowledge is conformed to Christ, and the highest cannot have a more excellent pattern. The Spirit in drawing grace in the soul fixeth his eye upon Christ in every line he draws, and forms the lineaments of habitual grace in some proportion to that original. Here we are said to be *σύμμορφοι*, of the same spiritual form and shape with the image of his Son. It is therefore called "a forming of Christ," Gal. iv. 19, "a changing into the same image," 2 Cor. iii. 18; *μεταμορφόμεθα*, metamorphosed from our natural into a spiritual shape, from glory to glory, from grace, glory begun, to glory, grace perfected. There is not only the shape of Christ, as a limner draws the picture of a man, but not the intellectual or moral endowments; but in this draught of grace in some measure there is. Believers are therefore said to have the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9. The same dispositions of holiness, &c. which were in Christ. The same mind which was in Christ, Phil. ii. 5. And to be partakers of Christ, Heb. iii. 14. Not of a part of Christ; partakers of his purchase, of his grace, of his nature; and that by faith, by holding the beginning of our confidence, our first ground of faith, and our first act of faith,

steadfast to the end. And are called his brethren, not by the human nature, (for so all men are,) but by a nature like his. Now the end of this conformity being that Christ might have brethren, and many brethren; can we imagine he would have one brother among the sons of men if this conformity to Christ were to be preserved by our own power? Certainly that tempter who would have deprived us of a Saviour, by making him to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, would quickly deprive us of his image, by hurling it down from the pinnacle of our hearts, and dashing all the dirt of hell upon it; and so the end of God in this absolute will of conforming us to Christ, being thereby to make him the first-born among many brethren, would be frustrated. For if any one true believer, thus conformed to Christ, might totally and finally fall, then a second, and a third might, and all till you come to the last man of them. And if we were left to our own care, we should as certainly lose this image, as Adam did in innocency. Can we preserve our spiritual life without this constant influence of God's grace, when we cannot our natural life, without an uninterrupted stream of his providence? and when Adam did not will to preserve himself without the influx of God's grace preserving him in the integrity of his nature?

Well then: will Christ suffer one to perish who hath the same nature, spirit, and mind which he himself hath? Will he endure that his own picture, drawn by the art of his Spirit, with the colours of his own blood, in so near a resemblance to him, that he hath not his image again in any thing in the world besides it, and this drawn for his own glory, that he might be a Head among many

brethren; will he suffer so excellent a piece as this to be torn in pieces, in contempt of him, either by flesh or devils?

6. Christ is as the head and husband of believers, by virtue of union with them. Union in all bodies is the ground of stability. There is no straiter union in the world than that of Christ to believers; it is therefore compared to all kinds of union, natural and political, to show the firmness of a believer's state upon all accounts. He is the Head, believers the members; he is the Root, they the branches; he the Husband, they the wife. The bands of this union are, on Christ's part, the Spirit; on our parts faith and love. The greatness of the person he sends, to bind it close on his part, shows the high delight he hath in it; and shall he not as much delight in continuing this union by preserving that faith and love which knits us to him? Christ's delight shall not be quenched, nor the Spirit's operation prove fruitless.

This will further appear by showing what kind of union this is:

(1.) It is a marriage union, and as a natural union of head and members. Both are discoursed on together by the apostle: "He that loves his wife, loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 28—30. In exhorting husbands to love their wives, he sets Christ as a copy to enforce it upon them. And, ver. 32, he seems to intimate, that his whole discourse, wherein he began to speak of the love of Christ to the church, from ver. 25, did refer to this: "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but

nourisheth it," provides for it, and clothes it, and beautifies it, and defends it against the injuries of the weather. So doth Christ nourish the graces of his people, and protects them against the temptations of Satan. What prince would without resistance see a traitor wrest his beloved queen from his arms, and cut her throat?

The apostle from this passes to mix both those unions together, and illustrates one by the other: "We are members of his body, of his flesh," &c. ver. 30, alluding to Eve's being taken out of Adam's side. And not only the church in general, but every believing member; we are members of his body; we believers, and every one of us. It being thus, it is impossible Christ can do any other than nourish and cherish his own body, and every member of it, his own spouse. For in doing so, he loves himself, ver. 28, as a head, as a husband, his mystical self, and his own honour, which is concerned in his spouse. No man ever yet hated his own flesh. Whatsoever is implanted in our nature as a perfection of it, is eminently in God. Now since he hath twisted with our nature a care of our own bodies, this care must be much more in the nature of Christ, because he hath a higher affection to his mystical body than we can have to our natural; for he is set here as the exemplar; and originals are always more excellent than the copied draughts. Would not every man improve both the beauty and strength of his own body, take care to preserve it from wounds, and to heal them when they are received, and not suffer the flesh to be mangled, unless it be for the security of the whole? This would be a hatred of his own flesh, which never any man in his right senses was guilty

of. Shall Christ then let spots always defile his body, and wounds putrify it for want of curing? Shall he let sin within, and the devil without, gnaw, slash, and cut his members, and stand by unconcerned? Will he suffer the least member of his body to be torn from him by his enemies? Shall our affectionate Redeemer, that hath taken upon him to be our Head, and to cause this union, and who delights in it, be the first that shall do such an unnatural act, and be worse natured to his body, than the most wicked man in the world is to his? Men do not use to cut off a finger for every wart or wen, or for every wound that hath putrefaction in it. Christ doth not cut off believers for their infirmities, he would then cut off his own members. Men rather use diseased parts with more tenderness, because they stand in more need of it. Christ therefore will much more cherish the afflicted part, and chase the disease away. Certainly, believers being members of his body, he must naturally care for their state, especially for that grace which is the band of union, and the vital spirit in all his members. Will he ever suffer that to decay for want of food? Christ hath not only the name, but the affection of a head; and it is his office by union, (and not only so, but his nature) as well as his Father's charge, to be careful of the preservation of his members. Shall he feel what is done against his people by persecutors? And will he not be much more sensible of what the flesh, that grand tyrant and persecutor of his people's graces, doth against his body, as well as what the lesser and more extrinsical enemies execute?

Objection. But if it be said, that there is no

doubt of Christ's faithfulness to us while we continue faithful to him; but we may cast off Christ from being our husband; and we being not natural, but mystical members, may cut off ourselves.

Answer. Against this the covenant secures: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me," Jer. xxxii. 40. The fear he hath put into our hearts, keeps us from ever departing from him. Besides, there is a stronger stay; God will not turn from us, to do us good, even the highest good, all the good he can. God stores us with habitual grace, and stands by it. It is God's keeping close to us, secures us from turning our backs upon him. Again, Christ's love to keep, is armed with gracious omnipotency to effect it, which no husband in the world hath over his wife, nor any man over any members of his body.

(2.) It is so strong a union, that Christ and a regenerate man become one spirit: "But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. One spirit, as if they had but one soul in two bodies. What the Spirit doth in Christ, it doth also in a believer, according to the capacity of his soul. The same Spirit which was the immediate conveyer of grace to the human nature of Christ, is so to us. Christ had an essential holiness in respect of his Godhead, but a derivative holiness as man. And this derivative holiness proceeded from the Spirit in him without measure, which we have in our measures. And by virtue of this union, by the same Spirit whereby you become one spirit with Christ, not only that grace which is in you

and the greatest apostle, are the same; but that grace which is in you and our great Mediator the Man Christ Jesus, are of the same nature and original. As the light of the sun and the light of a star are the same, but they differ in degrees, not essentially: and as we say of souls, souls are of equal dignity, though the actions are not the same, because of the indisposition of the organs, and the predominancy of some particular humour. It is the same spirit in Christ and a believer, as it is the same soul, in dignity, which is in an infant, and a man of the most refined parts. It is more here, for it is the same Spirit in respect of his person, which makes Christ very near of kin to us. This Spirit must either desert Christ, or us, before this union can be dissolved. Not Christ, for he had it in the world not by measure; and he is yet anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Not us, because the promises of Christ cannot be broken. This being the top-stone of the comfort of believers, in sending this Comforter, that he was to abide for ever.

(3.) This union of the soul to Christ is strengthened by the union of Christ to the Father: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," John xvii. 23, or into one. First the Father in Christ, and then Christ in believers. So that whatsoever fulness, strength, grace, the Father gives to Christ by virtue of his union with him, and which is communicable to his members, the same hath the soul by virtue of its union with Christ. And both these unions, that of the Father with Christ, and that of Christ with us, are for the perfection of all those that should be with him to the end of the world, even the weakest as well as

the strongest: for it refers to ver. 20. But we must understand this, not of that essential union between the Father and the Son, as they are one essence, but of the union of the Father to Christ as Mediator, in respect of the Father's influence upon him, and assistance of him. Christ being the medium of our union with God, both the Father's union with him, and his with us, are for our perfection. Because whatsoever grace Christ hath, by virtue of his union with the Father, is to be communicated to us according to our capacity, or employed for us according to our necessity. And from this union it is, that God loves believers as he loved Christ: "That the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me," ver. 23. Christ himself made no question but the Father loved believers as he loved him their head, with a similar, though not an equal love; but Christ would have the world know it, and themselves know it too, and therefore would have them sanctified, and at last perfected. From this passage, I think, this will plainly follow, that as Christ cannot miscarry because of his union with the Father, whereby he hath a continual influence from him; so neither can a believer by virtue of his union with Christ, which invests him in the same love which the Father bears to Christ.

Methinks the apostle refers to this passage: "Your life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3. Our life is hid with Christ by virtue of our union with him, as Christ is in God by union with the Father. Christ in God, and our life in Christ. The flesh, then, and the devils may as well pull God out of heaven, and overthrow the security of Christ, and pull him from the right hand of the

Father, as rob a true believer of his spiritual life, or pull grace, which is Christ formed in the heart out of the soul of a new creature.

(4.) From this union with Christ doth result a communion with him, which secures grace in a believer's heart: a communion with him in his death, and from thence a perfection. So the apostle argues: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed," &c. Rom. vi. 5, 6. If we are planted with him in the likeness of his death, for the destruction of the body of sin, we shall grow up with him in the likeness of his resurrection, for the perpetual life of grace. For by our dying with him we are freed from sin; that is, from serving sin, and yielding up ourselves to it. And this communion in his death, will introduce a communion with him in his life, ver. 8: Therefore as "Christ being raised again, dies no more;" so a christian being regenerate and raised from a death in sin (which spiritually answers to the resurrection of the body of Christ) cannot spiritually die again, ver. 9—11. For Christ formed in the heart dies no more there, than Christ exalted in heaven doth. The apostle then exhorts, that they should not obey sin in the lusts thereof, whereby he shows what this communion with Christ in his resurrection is, not a total present freedom from sin, but a not obeying sin in its lusts and motions, not reverencing the commands of it, as if it were our lord, not yielding ourselves to its service, but to the service of God, ver. 12, 13; which verses are a good comment upon those places, which some have made

an erroneous use of, and from which they do at this day cry up an absolute perfection in this life: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 John iii. 9; v. 18: he cannot morally, because of the seed of God, and strong habit of grace fed by union to, and communion with Christ.—I say, after this exhortation, this is the final inference the apostle makes: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace," ver. 14; that is, by virtue of your being in the covenant of grace, united to the Mediator of that covenant, who as surety hath satisfied the law for you, and brought it about that you are no more under the law, but under grace. And having a communion with him in his death and resurrection, you are in the same stable state inchoatively as Christ himself is, and you will be at last perfectly so in heaven. For that is the strength of the apostle's reasoning, as you will find by perusing that chapter at your leisure, namely, to show that it was impossible that any one who was in the covenant of grace, should abuse that grace to a licentiousness in sin, and a devoted affection to it, because if he had been once planted into that likeness of Christ's death, he is freed from sin, and will be planted in the likeness of Christ's resurrection; and therefore it will be impossible for him to be under the reign of sin. And to encourage them to keep up their standing against sin, he assures them, that sin shall have no dominion over them; as nothing makes a man fight more courageously in a battle, than to be sure of victory. Union cannot be without communion. For while the members are united to a living sound head,

there will be an influx of animal spirits, whereby they shall partake of life and motion. The spirit from our mystical Head will be working in us, providing for us, and standing by us for our preservation.

Well then: sum up this together, that this union is a marriage union, and that thereby we become the body of Christ, yea, and are actuated by the same spirit; add the union of the Father with Christ as well as that of Christ with us; and the communion both of his death and resurrection resulting from this union; and if those be not strong enough to hold and secure a true believer though he hath but little strength, he may then, and not till then, totally and finally fall away.

7. Christ is an Advocate of grace in respect of his intercession. Christ's office being that of an Advocate, doth ascertain this truth. An advocate is so to plead his client's right, that he may gain the victory over his adversary in the suit. Christ being an Advocate who always entertains a good cause, will certainly so manage it, that grace shall at length prove victorious.

(1.) The concerns of grace are the principal subject of his intercession.

[1.] Our standing in grace. Our first access by faith is the immediate fruit of his death in reconciling us. But our actual salvation, and all the methods of it, are the fruits of his life: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 2. The apostle in this verse mentions three things. 1. Our access by faith. 2. Our standing in this grace, whereunto we have access. 3. Our joy in the hopes of all the fruits

of it. All which are ascribed not only to his death, but to his life, and the two last principally to that, ver. 10, 11. By his death he takes away the partition-wall between God and us, built on our parts by sin, and on God's part by the hand of justice. By his life he preserves this access free and open, and secures the wall from ever being built up again to hinder our access; which would be, if sin should prevail: for if sin builds it on our part, justice could not but re-build it on God's part, were it not for the life of Christ, which doth as much maintain our standing, as his death did work our reconciliation, otherwise the apostle could not have put a "much more" to it. For by this life of Christ we can joy in God as our friend, who was formerly our enemy; because by Christ thus living, we receive the atonement; that is, it is continually applied to us: "By whom we have now received the atonement," ver. 11; just now, the fruits of the atonement; and by this constant application of the atonement, our standing is secured with joy; for in receiving the atonement made by his death from him now living, we receive all the other fruits of his purchase. Hence he is said to prepare heaven for us, that is, by keeping up the favour of God towards us, that when we come we may have the kindest reception, just as he doth make us meet below for the inheritance of the saints in light by his Spirit.

[2.] Our progress in sanctification. The keeping his seed from the evil, and preserving of them, is the main matter of all that prayer: "Keep them from the evil," John xvii. 15; from the devil, the head of sin, from all sorts of evils; evils within, and evils without; which implies not only a desire

negatively, that they might not be hurt by evil, but also that they might overcome it, and be improved by it. And that no believer should be discouraged, and think himself out of Christ's thoughts, he presents to his Father the whole generation of them to the end of the world, ver. 20. He holds up here all his seed, as it were, in his hand, as those to whom he would have those petitions then put up, answered in time, to every one of them, weak and strong, to the very last man that should give up his name to him; every one that should believe through the apostle's word; their word ministerially, because committed to them to be delivered down by them from age to age: so that the same gospel being now preached in the world, and producing the fruit of faith in any soul, entitles him to the benefits of this prayer. In his recovery of Peter by his prayer on earth, he sets a pattern of what he would do for all his people in heaven: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," Luke xxii. 32: which is evidenced by those words, "When thou art converted," &c. Tell them, that the rallying of thy routed faith, was by the prevalence of my prayer; and that they may expect the like from me in their temptations: that their faith shall not fail, but rather get a surer standing, as indeed Peter's did, who, though he so shamefully denied his Master under the power of the temptation, yet was the most forward afterwards to confess him in the teeth of his adversaries. As Paul's conversion was a pattern to after ages of the power of his grace for the turning the most giant-like sinners, so was this a pattern of the force of his intercession for the preservation and further sanctification of

oppressed believers. These words, "Strengthen thy brethren," would be of little force if it were not a leading case, and that Christ intended to make it a rule of court for the comfort of his people who are like Peter, having the revelation of Christ from God, and not from flesh and blood.

[3.] The keeping the covenant firm in both the parts of it, as the foundation of both these. Therefore in the solemn appearance of God in prophetic visions, relating to the gospel dispensation, both before the manifestation of Christ, and since, the throne of God is encircled with a rainbow. But the place I would consider is Jer. xxx. 21, 22: "And their governor shall proceed from the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord? and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." God causeth Christ to draw near, and gives him a power of mediating: "I will cause him to draw near." Christ accepts it, he shall approach unto me; who? their governor that shall proceed from the midst of them. God then breaks out into a delightful astonishment at this approach of Christ to him as a Surety and Advocate, so that he gives out all blessings upon his asking, Who is this that hath engaged his heart? hath become a surety in his heart; so the original word is used and translated, Gen. xliv. 32: "Thy servant hath become a surety for the lad;" and likewise Prov. vi. 1: "If thou be surety for thy friend." This is that which makes the covenant firm, and preserves the union between God and us. "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God," ver. 22: I understand it of the mediation of Christ in general, but with a

particular application to his intercession, as being a great part of that mediation, and the principal, if not the only continued act of it. Now as long as those engagements of his heart, those affections remain, he hath liberty as a surety to approach to God, which he will always have; and as long as God delights in it, as here he doth even to admiration, so long shall believers be God's people, and he their God. Certainly such an answer doth Christ receive upon every act of his intercession, even a covenant answer: God saith, That poor weak believing soul whom thou dost plead for, shall be mine, one of my people, and I will be his God, and I will do what thou wilt for him.

(2.) His intercession seems to be appointed by his Father for this end, the support and happiness of those that believe in him. Which appears not only in that fore-mentioned place of Jeremiah, wherein God would cause him to approach to him for the keeping the covenant stable between God and his people; but in Psa. ii. 8: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;" which is Christ's patent for this office of Advocate; and granted him after his resurrection, intimated in those words: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." As Christ did not die for himself, or rise again for himself, but as a public person; so he hath this power of asking, and promise of receiving upon asking, as a public person, as a King and Governor, as he is styled in Jer. xxx. 21; and as he is set King upon his holy hill of Sion, that is, King in his church. If he had then this grant of asking, as a public person, and as King in his church, it must then be employed for

those who are his church, his voluntary subjects, those for whom he died and rose again. If his asking were designed as a means to come to the possession of his inheritance, the possession of the gentiles, by the same reason it is also designed as a means for the improvement of his inheritance. For those that are chiefly his heritage in the world, his garden in the wilderness, so pleasant to him, Psa. xvi. 6, that if he can make it more pleasant for asking, he will not stick at it, and God will do it for him. For the large promise made him implies both the preservation and improvement of his inheritance, to make it comfortable to him. This power of asking was chiefly designed for believers, as appears by the use the psalmist makes of it; of exhortation to the powers of the world, ver. 10, 11, to serve him; but of exultation in the latter end of ver. 12 to believers: "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." If it were not designed by God for them, and for every one of them, (all they,) and to be employed for them chiefly, they would be no more blessed than others. And this blessedness doth consist in justification and sanctification; for, "Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven," Psa. xxxii. 1; and Christ blesseth us by turning us away from iniquity, Acts iii. 26.

(3.) Christ doth ask this blessing of grace in particular, for every believer in particular, which still adds a strength to this truth. Christ's living for ever to make intercession for us, is the reason rendered why he is able to save to the uttermost, Heb. vii. 25. If he lives for ever to make intercession, for the perfect salvation of his people, he doth consequently intercede for all those things which may promote the perfection of their salvation,

and consequently for their graces, which are necessary to it. Therefore the habit of grace shall be actually and perpetually preserved, otherwise Christ's intercession would be in vain. And this he doth in particular for every believer. They were given to him in particular, they come to God by him in particular, and he saves them in particular; therefore he intercedes for them in particular, even for all those that come unto God by him. As they come, he intercedes for them; as a great master of requests he receives the petitions of every comer, and presents their particular cases to his Father, with a good and powerful word of his own: so he prayed for Peter in particular: "I have prayed for thee" (and for thy grace too) "that thy faith fail not," Luke xxii. 32. It is probable Christ prayed for all; it seems to be implied; Satan longed to have every one of them; he hath earnestly desired you to sift you as wheat. He prayed particularly for their faith, that it might not be conquered; because this being the fundamental grace, if this stands, all the rest keep up their heads. His intercession is for every thing which may preserve, and against every thing which may destroy. Not only for the preservation itself, but for the particular means of it: "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," John xvii. 17. Do it by thy word; where he intercedes for the keeping up a gospel in the world in subserviency to this end, their sanctification. Do it by thy truth, that incorruptible seed, that eternal gospel, eternal in the duration of the effects of it; so that thy standing, and all the means of it, the habit and the very acting of thy faith, the impressions made upon thy soul by any particular truth, are the fruits of

Christ's intercession. I cannot imagine that a person whom Christ doth in so particular a manner intercede for in all his concerns, can fall totally and finally.

(4.) He intercedes more fervently (if there be any degrees at all in his affection in heaven above what he had here) in heaven, than he did upon the earth. If he upon the earth did pray so earnestly to his Father to keep them, and that a little before his death, when the sorrows of death and the grave, the contest he was to have with his Father's wrath began to stare him in the face, when he had a foresight of all those bruises his soul was shortly to suffer, which, if anything, might reasonably divert his thoughts, and damp his affections from praying for others;—when he hath conquered all this, and hath no more death to suffer, no infirmity of the flesh to clog him, not the least eclipse of his Father's countenance so dreadfully to groan under; he will rather be more fervent than cold in his suit. Shall he pray against the indulged sins of his enemies under the anguish of death, and not against the lamented and troublesome corruptions of his friends in the triumphs of glory? Shall he pray for his murderers under the horror of his Father's wrath, and not plead for the support of his people's graces in the arms of his Father's love? Hath he not more encouragements to plead strongly for them, since he sits upon a throne of grace, than when he suffered upon a cross by justice? He stood at his death as a guilty person charged with the guilt of others, but in heaven he pleads as a righteous Advocate freed from all that guilt, which was then charged upon him. Hath he not more engagements? Shall not the esteem

of his purchase, the value of his Father's gift, honour of his conquest, consent of his people, credit of his office, obedience to his Father's charge, elevated affection, delight in his people's graces, care of his image, relation of a husband, straitness of union,—shall not all these inflame his spirit with a zeal in his plea beyond the power of a control, were there a possibility of any?

(5.) His intercession now must be every jot as prevalent, if not more, than his prayer upon earth. If he prevailed at the tribunal of God's justice by his satisfaction, which was the sharpest conflict he could ever enter into, shall he not much more prevail at the throne of God's grace by his intercession? If his death were powerful to procure a perfect righteousness for our justification, his intercession will keep pace with it to apply that, and perfect grace for our sanctification. Will not Christ be successful in one as well as the other, and as good at finishing the work in heaven, as he was at finishing his work on earth? Especially when his finishing his work on earth is the foundation of the continuance of that work of his intercession, being first a Propitiation, and then an Advocate. It will certainly produce as perfect effects for the perfection of the weakest believer, as his death upon the cross did for his reconciliation; which is to present us holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in God's sight, Col. i. 22.

How strongly grounded his intercession in heaven is, and what arguments he doth use, see John xvii. 11, 12: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee; holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one

as we are. While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name, those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition. I am no more in the world, [corporeally] but these are in the world." I shall leave those behind me in a world of temptation and misery. I come to thee. I shall shortly ascend to thee. Now, holy Father, keep through thy name, &c. Here we have, 1. God's relation to himself, and to his people; Father, not my holy Father. The relation reaches not only to the Intercessor, but the persons pleaded for. Christ in heaven pleads with God as a Father, his Father, our Father. 2. God's holiness—"Holy Father." Not merciful, powerful Father, or righteous Father, as afterwards. Grace is an image of God's holiness, and therefore is the most proper attribute of God to be used as an argument for the preservation of it. 3. The gift of God; keep those whom thou hast given me; which he urgeth twice. Thou gavest them me to redeem and sanctify, not wholly to part with them, but to be presented to thee again in a better state. I had never had them but by thy donation. Thou didst not give them to me that they might perish, but that they might be kept; keep therefore thy own gift, that they may be returned to thee in a better state. Thou gavest them me, and they are still thine, neglect not thy own, because thou art immutable in thy counsel and affection. 4. The end why God gave them to Christ—"That they may be one as we are." Father, why thou didst give them to me, was that they might be one, as we are; keep them therefore till they attain this end in perfection, that thy aim may not be frustrated. 5. God's past preservation

of them—"I have kept them through thy name." Though I have been in the world with them, and have kept them, it was through thy strength; and in my present petition, I desire no greater a strength, than what already thou hast exerted for their preservation. 6. His own obedience to God—"Those whom thou gavest me, I have kept." He lays a stress upon God's donation, and his own faithfulness. I have been obedient to thee in the keeping of them, because they were thy gift. Wilt thou command me to keep that which thou thyself wilt neglect and slight? Wilt thou be careless of that charge thou gavest me such strict orders to preserve? Shall my faithfulness to thee in that charge outstrip thy mercifulness to them, and care of their standing? 7. The success of his care—"None of them is lost." This charge thou gavest me, not to lose any. I have hitherto performed it. Not one son of election, but only that of perdition, which was given to me as my attendant, not my charge. The but, or εἰ μὴ, doth not weaken this assertion of Christ. As Camero and others observe, εἰ μὴ is not by way of exception, but opposition. He was not of the number of those given to Christ, but of another rank and society, as Gal. ii. 16: "A man is not justified" εἰ μὴ "but by the faith of Jesus Christ;" where faith is set in opposition to works in justification. Not at all by works; but only by faith, so Matt. xxiv. 36: "Of that day and hour knows no man, no not the angels in heaven, but" εἰ μὴ "my Father only." The Father is set in opposition to men and angels, not excepted as either man or angel; so Judas here is set in opposition to those that were given to Christ, not excepted as a lost part of that number. I have

dwelt the larger on it, that it may serve as an improvement of what hath been spoken. It will be a good pattern of prayer; arguments may be fetched from those topics so far as will suit us to plead with God in our case, and there is scarcely any of these considerations which have been delivered, but may be turned into an argument in prayer.

Now sum up all this. Doth Christ plead for our standing in grace, and progress in sanctification, and live for this end? Did he set Peter up as a pattern of what he would do in this case? Is the covenant kept firm by his mediation, and covenant answers procured by his intercession? Is it appointed by God for this very end, namely, the blessedness of his people? Doth he present every man's case in particular, and intercede for his grace in particular, and what truth shall make impressions on him? Is there some reason to think he is more fervent in it now, than he was upon the earth? to be sure no less. Are the arguments he uses very strong? Then the standing even of the weakest grace is sure. Before that can fall, God must change his end in giving his Son a power to ask, Christ must leave pleading, or his arguments must lose their strength. But as Ambrose said to Monica concerning Augustine, who remained in his natural condition, notwithstanding his good education, and his mother's prayers—It is impossible that a son of so many prayers should perish. So may I say of grace—It is impossible a child of so many, such fervent, such powerful intercessions in all circumstances, can ever, either totally, or finally perish.

III. The Spirit is engaged in this business. The reason why God puts his Spirit into the heart,

is to preserve us from departing from him, Jer. xxxii. 40. As Christ was true and faithful to God in the end of his coming; so will the Spirit be faithful to God in the end of his being put into the heart. It is the same Spirit which, being upon Christ, enabled him to perform his charge, Isa. xi. 2, 3, and made him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, to establish him in faithfulness and obedience to God in his mediatorial work. The same Spirit is in us to establish us in the fear of God, to keep that principle of God's fear put into our hearts, alive. And as the Spirit performed his office fully upon the human nature of Christ, so it will not be deficient in us according to our measure. Consider the Spirit every way, and this work of preserving grace will appear to be his business. What Christ doth by his proxy, may well be interpreted to be his own act.

1. His mission. If Christ was not to break the bruised reed, surely no messenger sent by him, is to do it. The Spirit is sent by the Father in his Son's name, John xiv. 26. He is sent by Christ from the Father, John xv. 26. With his Father's consent and commission. There is a conjoint authority, sent by commission from both; sent to supply Christ's place upon earth. Christ's business in part was to keep his people, and he wanted one to do it after his departure. Therefore he prays his Father to keep them in his name, John xvii. 11. In answer to this prayer the Spirit is sent. Therefore sent by the Father and Son in subserviency to this end of preserving his people, and comes himself with an intention to answer this end, and perform the covenant. If both concur in sending him, his mission must be in order to the

fulfilling what was agreed upon by the Three Persons, and more particularly by the Father and Son in the mediatorial covenant; for they would never send one that should go contrary to the covenant they were engaged in.

2. His titles. He is called,

(1.) A Comforter. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter," John xiv. 16. The Comforter. Such another comforter as I have been unto you, and in some respect better, a more spiritual comforter. It was expedient that Christ should go away, that this Comforter might come: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you," John xvi. 7. I tell you the truth. I must deal plainly with you; I have a great desire the Comforter should come, and if I go not away, he will not come. Intimating thereby, that it was a greater blessing to have the Comforter with them, than Christ in person. What comfort could they have in this declaration, and what expediency in it, if the Spirit did not mind the same end in keeping and preserving us as Christ did? It had been no ways expedient; better a thousand times Christ had never gone, and the Comforter never come, if it were not for the same end, which Christ minded in the world. The ends of Christ were, to give the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified, Isa. lxi. 3. As this was the work of Christ, so this is the work of the Spirit as a Comforter, to make the heart grow up in fruit to the glory of God.

(2.) An abiding Comforter. "That he may abide with you for ever," John xiv. 16; he must abide with us in the capacity wherein he is sent, that is, as a Comforter. His comfort would signify little, if it did not meet with the main trouble which pesters us; that is, the fear of miscarrying, and not continuing to the end. Oh, I am afraid that this little spark may be quenched by the floods cast out of the dragon's mouth, that this little faith may be wounded to death by some strong temptations. I doubt it will quickly gasp its last; I have but a little oil in the cruse, it will soon be wasted, and I shall die. These kind of thoughts every believer hath more or less. The chosen vessel and the greatest instrument for God that ever was, found such fears clambering up in him: "I keep under my body, lest that by any means I myself should be a castaway," 1 Cor. ix. 27. The Spirit therefore must be a Comforter to meet this grand trouble, and melt this gloomy cloud which doth so often darken the strong, as well as the weak believer. And truly every one's experience can testify, that when such thoughts do creep up, some hopes also start up with them from the Spirit, like a covenant-rainbow with a shower; and one thing which, as a Comforter, he is to convince the world of (and the best part of the world too, even those that are convinced of unbelief, sinfulness, and the necessity and sufficiency of the righteousness of Christ) is, that the prince of this world is judged and condemned, his works dissolved, and that he shall never more have power over believers to ruin them, John xvi. 11. He is to abide with us to that end and purpose for which he came into our hearts; and that was to bring us to God; therefore his

abiding with us, is to keep us with God. If our first conversion were the work of the Spirit, and our standing in it our own, we should be more beholden to ourselves than to the Spirit, because a good condition stable, is a greater blessing than a good condition mutable. If the Spirit stand only as a careless spectator, to see how we would steer our course, without putting his hand to the helm, what good would his abiding with us do? If a man have a great business to do, the presence of a multitude of men doth him no good, unless he hath assistance from them. By the Spirit's abiding with us, is meant, not the remaining of his person without his operations. As when God promises to be present with us, he doth not mean his essential presence, (for that cannot but be present whether he promiseth it or not,) but his gracious presence. The Spirit abides with believers not only in moving them, for so he abides with wicked men, but efficaciously moving, not only in their first conversion, but in their growth and progress.

The Use is,

1. Matter of information.
2. Of comfort.
3. Of duty.

First Use. *Information.*

The doctrine of the possibility of a total and final apostasy of a regenerate man after grace infused, is not according to truth. You see upon what pillars the doctrine we have asserted, stands. Whence it follows, that the contrary doctrine of the apostasy of a regenerate man, is against the whole tenour of the covenant of grace, against the attributes of God engaged in it and about it, against the design of Christ the Mediator of it, against the

charge committed to him, against the end of the Spirit's mission and abiding with us.

The question then may be thus stated—Whether that vital principle or habit of grace put into the heart by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost at the conversion of the soul, be not perpetually preserved and cherished by the same Spirit, so that it never dies. And that therefore a regenerate man endued with this vital principle, neither can, nor will, by reason of this implanted and inworking grace of the Spirit, fall from faith, and serve sin, so as to give himself up wholly to the commands of it. The question is not—Whether we shall persevere if grace doth continue, as the contrary minded assert, and accordingly gloss upon the scriptures alleged for it. Such a question would be ridiculous. It is as much as to ask whether a man shall live to-morrow if his life remain in him? or whether the sun shall shine to-morrow if its light continues? and is as much as to say, a man shall persevere if he doth persevere. But—Whether the habit of grace, the fear of God, faith, the new creature, new man, or howsoever you will term it, be not so settled in the soul as that it shall never be totally removed? Some affirm that it may be. Satan was of this persuasion when he told God to his face: "Put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face," Job. i. 8—11; he thought that smart afflictions would divest Job of that uprightness God so signally applauded in him, as a non-such in all the earth. The chief ground is, that they lay all, both conversion and preservation, upon the will of man, not grace.

I shall therefore lay down,

they were offered, a conscience of sin was excited in the presenter of them, iniquity was called to remembrance, Heb. x. 2, 3. The whole scene of that administration loudly published, that the wrath against sin was not appeased, the guilt of the soul not wiped off. If a man had presented a sacrifice for his sin one day, and fallen into the same, or another, before night, he must have repeated his sacrifice for a new expiation; had there been ability in them to perform so great a thing, there had not been a repetition. They were rather a commemoration of sin, and confession of it, than expiations of any; rather accusers, than atoners.

4. God had often spoken slightly of them. He resembles them to the cutting off a dog's neck, when done with an unholy heart, Isaiah lxvi. 3. While the temple stood, he struck their fingers off from hanging upon them, Isa. i. 11—13. indeed he would not reprove them for their offerings, Psa. l. 8. but he would not have them place their justification in them. He professeth he had no delight in them, Psa. xl. 6. If all sacrifices of the law were not of such value, as love to him, and fear of him, they could not expiate; and if that which was more excellent than those, were too weak to effect it, an utter inability must remain in the other. He doth frequently predict the abolition of them, and hath destroyed the temple to which he had affixed them, which remains in desolation without a sacrifice to this day. Besides, he never provided a typical remedy for all sins in them; some transgressors were to be cut off without a sacrifice for them, according to the judicial law, the rule of the government of that people;

suspended between man and wife, though the conjugal knot be not dissolved. Believers may be separated from Christ's smiles, but not from their relation to Christ, and being in him. Comfortable interest may be interrupted, when radical interest receives no damage. A leper under the law was hindered of actual enjoyment of his house, but not deprived of his legal title to it.

(3.) Relative grace cannot be lost. Every regenerate man being the son of God by a double title, that of regeneration and adoption, can never cease to be his son. The relation of a son to a father is indissoluble. It can never be, that he who is once a son can become no son: the relation is firm, though the affection may be on both sides extinguished. The relation we have to God, as his children, is knit with that other of heirs. The apostle made no doubt of the truth of that consequence: "If children, then heirs, and heirs of God," Rom. viii. 17. And he was afterwards of the same mind: "And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ," Gal. iv. 7. If it be objected: True, unless a believer disinherit himself by an undutiful and contemptuous carriage. But he cannot, unless he should cease to be a creature. For the same apostle doth as positively affirm in a triumphant manner, that no other creature, under which believers themselves are comprehended, can separate from the love of God: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels," &c. "nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 38, 39. And the other apostle comes in as a witness, that a son of God, so born, can never be guilty of such a contemptuous carriage

habitually, as may end in a disinheriting of him, because the seed of God, whereby he was born, remains in him, as the band of his relation: "His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 John iii. 9. His being born of God is the rock against the flood of sin, because he is born of God, and makes it eternally true, that such an one is the son of God. Who ever did, or ever will hear of a son of God by those two titles in hell? It seems not congruous to Divine Wisdom, to make any his heirs, whom he saw he should disinherit. No wise man would do so, if he were conscious of all future events, and did sincerely adopt a person. And shall the allwise God be represented weaker than man?

(4.) The habit of inherent grace cannot be lost. A believer hath eternal life in actual possession, in the seed, and in reversion in the harvest, John vi. 54. It is plain: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever," 1 Pet. i. 23. It is called an incorruptible seed in opposition to corruptible, both in its own nature, and the effects produced by it. But this seed of the word being incorruptible, raises effects according to its nature. The antithesis is express; we are not born of corruptible seed, which is of a perishing nature, but of an incorruptible seed. The seed of our regeneration is incorruptible; the word, the instrument, is unchangeable; the Spirit, the efficient cause who manages the word, and thereby infuseth the seed, abides for ever. All these causes agreeing in one attribute of "incorruptible," must needs produce an effect suitable to the nature of them. It is indemonstrable, that so many incorruptible causes

should centre in a corruptible effect, and be combined together to produce an ephemeron, a thing that may have no longer life, according to this opinion, than the day it is born in. Further, the connexion of those words with verse 17, &c. import as much. He exhorts them to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear, not servile, but filial: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things," ver. 18. Be encouraged to all holy and humble obedience, since you are fully assured of your perfect redemption, &c. As the blood of Christ doth not purchase a corruptible redemption, so neither doth the grace of Christ work a corruptible regeneration. As the blood of Christ was incorruptible blood, by virtue of the hypostatical union, and in regard of the efficacy of it to our redemption; so is grace an incorruptible seed, by reason of the believer's union with the Son of God, its production by the Spirit of God, and in regard of that incorruptible word, whereby it is both begotten and maintained in us. The habit of grace attends the soul to heaven, and for ever. The vital principle was not extinct in David by his gross fall, since we find him not praying for salvation, but the joy of it; not praying for the giving the Spirit, but not taking it away from him, which he had by his sin deserved to be deprived of: "Take not thy holy Spirit from me: restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," Psa. li. 11, 12: and also for greater degrees of sanctification, and cleansing his heart from its filthiness and falseness. Grace may indeed, like the sun, be under an eclipse, but its internal light and heat cannot expire.

(5.) Though grace be oppressed, yet it will

recover itself. It is indeed sometimes overtopped by temptation, (as a fountain which being overflowed by the torrent of a neighbouring river, is covered while the flood lasts, that a man knows not where to find it; but, after those great waters are slid away, the fountain bubbles up as clearly as before,) yet it works all that while under the oppression, though not perceived. It will rise again by virtue of a believer's union with Christ; as a bough bent down by force, yet by virtue of its union to the body of the tree will return to its former posture, when the force is removed. The sap in the root of a tree, which the coldness of the season hath stript of its leaves, will, upon the return of the sun, disperse itself, and, as it were, meet it in the utmost branches, and renew its old acquaintance with it. Shall the Divine nature in the soul be outstript by mere nature in the plants? Grace can never be so blown out, but there will be some smoke, some spark, whereby it may be rekindled. The smoking snuff of Peter's grace was lighted again by a sudden look of his Master. Yea, it may by a secret influence of the Spirit gather strength to act more vigorously after its emerging from under the present oppression, like the sun more warm in its beams after it hath been obscured by fogs. Peter's love was more vigorous after his recovery. Christ implied it, when he acquainted him with his danger, that he who had not strength to keep his faith from falling, should after his rising have strength both for himself and his brethren: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," Luke xxii. 32.

2. Let us see what inconveniences and reflections upon God do follow from their doctrine

Their denial of this truth is grounded upon their denial of election, and on the supposed resistibility of grace, by the will of man.

(1.) It evacuates all the promises of God, and concludes them to be empty vain things. As if they were made by God in mockery, and to sport himself in deceiving his creature.

[1.] It frustrates the glory he designs by the promises. Doth God promise his presence with the church to the end of the world? and doth it consist with Infinite Wisdom to make an absolute promise concerning an uncertainty? It is possible, according to this doctrine, that God might not have so much as one sincere worshipper, one faithful servant in the whole earth; not one immediately capable of his gracious presence. What would become of the glory he intended to himself by all the promises of redemption and sanctification, and those praises and admirations he expects from men, when according to this doctrine it is possible there might not be one to give him the glory due to his name, if it were left to their natural wills, whether they would receive the grace offered them, or continue in it if they do receive it? For if one saint may fall away notwithstanding the covenant of grace, the truth of God, and the strength of Christ, why may not another, and a third, till there be not the appearance of one sincere christian? What certainty then had there been of a church in the world for God to be present with? What certainty of any admirer of his grace to eternity? Nay, what certainty that any would have received it, had it been left wholly to their natural wills? The scripture intimates otherwise by representing man to us as dead in sin and enmity against God, one

that cannot receive the things of God, &c. May a man be said sincerely to worship God one hour, that doth cast dirt upon him the next, as the peasants in Germany deal with their St. Urban, the patron of their vines? Is that a worship intended by his promises, that might not endure the space of one minute, but be succeeded by the grossest despites and rebellions? Is that fear put into the heart, that they might never depart from him, of no greater prevalency than to come to so sudden a period, and produce no better effects? Is so slight, so short-lived a worship, fit for the great God by so many declarations in scripture to promise himself from his creature? No better it would be if it were left only to the creature's corrupt will, and the management of that natural enmity which is in the heart. Is the holiest soul in the world, without assisting and preventing grace, so sure of the immovableness of his own will, among so many blustering storms and temptations, or flesh-pleasing snares and allurements?

[2.] It frustrates the promises made to Christ. Is it consistent with the faithfulness of God to be careless of all the agonies, groans, and blood of his Son? Our Saviour might have bled, and died, and not see one grain of seed, but have lost all the travail of his soul, if this doctrine be true. Will God, according to these men's fancies, make no greater account of his oath? "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips," Psa. lxxxix. 33—36; that the seed of his servant David, the Messiah, as the Jews understand it, should endure for ever, and his loving-kindness he would not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. This,

though sworn but once by his holiness, is enough for an eternal obligation upon God, and a perpetual ground of faith to us. The pleasure of the Lord was promised to prosper in his hand, Isa. liii. 10. It was to break through all opposition, and overcome all invaders. Is it a way to glorify his faithfulness to Christ, to take the pleasure, the object of his pleasure, the fruit of his death out of the hands of Christ, and put it into the hands of free-will? The promise is, that his pleasure should prosper in *his* hand, not in our hands, not in the hands of natural will.

[3.] It frustrates the comfort of the promises to us. Doth not this doctrine give the lie to that blessed apostle, who was wiser in the mysteries of the gospel than the whole world besides? Doth it not accuse him of arrogance, when by a Divine inspiration he confidently persuades himself and all other believers, that neither angels, nor principalities, &c. should separate them from the love of God? Rom. viii. 38, 39. Doth God in the scripture pronounce those actually blessed that put their trust in Christ the Messiah? "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," Psa. ii. 12. How can it deserve the name of blessedness, and in all of them too, if the faith of any one that sincerely believes in him could be totally and finally lost? Could they be blessed even while they have faith, since the comfort and happiness of any particular act of faith would be overwhelmed by the tormenting fears of the possibility and probability of their losing the habits of it? It is not only likely, but certain to be lost, if its preservation depended upon no other hand but the slight hold of our own will. Adam in innocence fell under a

covenant of works, and we should as soon lose our habitual grace under a covenant of grace, did not our stability depend upon a supernatural and Divine power promised in it. This doctrine therefore wipes off all the oil of gladness from believers' hearts, and contrary to Christ's commission clothes them with the spirit of heaviness, instead of the garments of praise.

(2.) It darkens the love of God. Are the products of infinite love so light, as these men would make them? Is not his love as immutable as himself? Can there be decays in an eternal and unchangeable affection? Can any emergencies be unknown from eternity to his omniscience? How then can the fountain of kindness be frozen in his breast? Shall not that everlasting love, which was the only motive to draw the believer at the first conversion to him, be as strong an argument to him to preserve the believer with him? "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3. It was love in the choice; but by the expression loving-kindness, it seems to be increased in the execution. What is it then that should make it run as fast backward till it dissolve into disaffection? Was there a love of benevolence towards them in appointing them to be heirs of salvation, when they lay like swine in the confused mass and mire of the corrupt world? And is there not a love of complacency in them, since he hath pardoned them according to the riches of his grace, renewed them by the power of his word, and sealed them by the Holy Spirit of promise? Is it likely this everlasting love should sink into hatred, and the glorious fruits of it be dashed in pieces at one blow

by a sudden change? To what purpose did he lay the first stone of thy redemption, and bring the blood of his Son and thy soul to kiss each other? Was it not that he might be your God in covenant with you? It was so in the type, the deliverance from Egypt: "Whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, that I might be their God," Lev. xxvi. 45. Much more in the antitype, the deliverance from Satan. Could the kindness of God be so illustrious, if it did not make the permanency of his gifts a great part of the benefit of them? Can these men then fancy infinite tenderness so unconcerned, as to let the apple of his eye be plucked out, as to be a careless spectator of the pillage of his jewels by the powers of hell, to have the delight of his soul (if I may so speak) tossed like a tennis-ball between himself and the devil? which must be the consequence of this doctrine, if a renewed man be at one time in the hands of God, and presently after in the hands of the devil. Is this easy parting with them, like the affection of a mother to her sucking infant? How much less suitable is it to the kindness of God, which infinitely surmounts the other!

(3.) It disgraceth his wisdom and power. Doth this doctrine support the honour of God's wisdom in contriving ways so admirable for the restoration of his creature that may be lost in a moment? Is it congruous to infinite wisdom, set on work in man's recovery, to make a covenant that should be more uncertain than the former? Which would be, if it depended only upon the voluble and inconstant temper of the creature's corrupt will for the making it good. The former was less likely to be violated by a nature filled with integrity, than this

by a nature stuffed with iniquity. Is it consistent with the honour of this attribute, to have his wonderful designs, wherein he intended to make known his manifold wisdom, puffed away by a breath of sin and Satan? Was God subject to error or ignorance, in not foreseeing what events might happen, before he obliged himself by promise; or to dissimulation if he did foresee, and notwithstanding all these contrivances and preparations, not absolutely intend the salvation of any one man, but leave it to themselves whether they would be saved or not? It disgraceth his power. Where can any safety be expected, if not in our Redeemer's hand? Shall his power be beaten out of breath by the wrestling of the devil? None, say these men, shall pluck them out of God's hand, while they remain there; but they may depart themselves: as though that promise, John x. 28, did not provide against their inward corruption, as well as external violence. But the promise is exclusive of all ways of destruction: "They shall not perish," in the original two negatives to strengthen it, according to the custom of the Greeks: and it is not as it is translated, "no man," but, "not any one:" if they depart, they perish; but because they shall not perish, against which the promise secures them, therefore they shall not depart. If they may be overcome against the will of God, and against his promise, it may be inferred that the devil is superior to God, and that God hath not power, or wants will to make good his promise of perseverance to them. As there never was, so there never will be any violation of his faithfulness, or breach made upon his power. Had God let them lie in their sins, no objection could be made; but since by

such an admirable power he hath snatched them from the clutches of the prince of darkness, doth it consist with his wisdom or goodness to throw them away, or to let them fall out of his hands into the power of their old oppressor?

(4.) It sets God at great uncertainties as to the object of his love. If a renewed man be discarded from God's favour, and lose the habit of grace because he commits a sin which deserves death, he would upon every sin be cashiered, because every sin deserves death by the rigour of the law, Rom. vi. 23. And the whole life of a christian would be nothing else but an interchange of friend and enemy, son and no son. Nay there could not be a moment fixed, wherein it could be said of any godly man in this life, that he was in God's favour, and had the habit of grace, because there is not a moment but man is guilty of some sin or other, of infirmity at least. If it be said, it is meant only of those sins that waste the conscience: these, we say, cannot live in the constant practice of a regenerate man. But suppose he be overtaken, is he then cast out of favour, that is, out of God's everlasting love? I would demand, if he be, what brings him in again? Good works afterwards? Alas! there is not one of them but is mixed with that which deserves eternal death. Can they bring us into favour, which need something themselves to make them accepted? Can a filthy rag look so amiable in the eyes of God, as to introduce us into a forfeited favour? Is it our Saviour's merit? That is as sufficient to keep our union with God indissoluble, as it is upon every breach to renew it; for the merit of Christ is greater than the demerit of sin. If every act of unbelief did destroy faith,

might it not be destroyed and revived a hundred times a day? For what is the course of the best christian, but a mixture of faith and unbelief? It is true the *bent* of the heart stands right in faith; but there are frequent starts of unbelief. Now according to this doctrine, there would be so many blottings out, and so many writings again of their names in the book of life every day. A man may be, in their sense, in God's favour, and out of it many times in a day; one moment in a state of salvation, the next in a state of damnation; and so run in a circle from salvation to damnation all the year long. Is this uncertainty like the stability of mountains and hills, a greater than which God promises? "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 10. God provided such a covenant of peace that might not be removed, that he might not be at such constant removes in his kindness, as these men would make him. Is it not unworthy to make such a representation of the allwise and immutable God, as if he were daily caressing his creatures, and daily repenting of those gifts of effectual calling, which the scripture asserts to be without repentance? Rom. xi. 29. Repentance of any design is an effect of weakness of judgment as well as mutability of will.

(5.) It doth the rather set God at uncertainties, because it doth subject the grace of God to the will of man. It hangs the glory of God's grace in all the motions of it, and the efficacy of the promise upon the slipperiness of man's will and affections. It makes the omnipotent grace of God follow, not

precede the motions of man's will; to be the lacquey not the leader, either in converting or preserving; which is at the best to make the glory of his grace as volatile as a feather, at the best sometimes up sometimes down; the soul this moment embraced by God with the dearest affections, the next cast out as a vessel wherein is no pleasure, and the succeeding moment admitted to fresh communications; this hour the temple of the Holy Ghost, the next an habitation for dragons and satyrs, the will of man giving one time the key to the Spirit, the next time to the devil; one time as clean as a saint, another time as foul as a fallen angel; so that a christian's life would be spent in nothing but ejectments and repossessions between God and the devil, and the grace of God be beholden for its residence in the heart only to the humour of the will. Is it reasonable thus to subject the fruits of the great undertaking of Christ to the lottery of fancy, and to take the crown from the head of grace, to set upon the scalp of our corrupt will?

(6.) It frustrates the design and fruits of election. The seduction of believers by false prophets, with their train of great signs and wonders, which our Saviour concludes impossible: "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," Matt. xxiv. 24, is, according to this doctrine, very easy and natural. One start of the fancy completes it. The impossibility of their embracing, or at least persisting in damnable errors, is founded upon the eternal choice of them by God, and his decree for their preservation. It was the entry of their names into the Lamb's book of life, that

preserved his followers from the contagion in the universal apostasy of the Romish church: "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb," Rev. xiii. 8. If believers could totally and finally fall away from Christ, why is it impossible for them to be deceived by damning errors accompanied with such wonders, that might stupify the reason of the wisest natural men, and the elect too, did not their election make it impossible? The very elect. But it is laid upon a higher score than their own wisdom, and depends upon that golden chain of electing love, which neither the wit of man nor malice of devils, the terrors of afflictions nor pleasures of temptations are able to break, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

(7.) It frustrates the fruits of Christ's mediation and offices. Was it not the design of his coming, according to the ancient promise, that all nations should be blessed in him, in the seed of Abraham, which seed he was? According to this doctrine it is uncertain at the best, whether or not any one person should be blessed by him. If the gates of hell could prevail against one real member of Christ, they might against a second, and a third, till he should not have one member to enjoy a blessing by him. Grace infused is as the holy fire upon the altar, which descended from heaven, Lev. vi. 12, 13. And as it was the priest's office, so it is the office of Christ the antitype, to feed it morning and evening by his Spirit, with fresh fuel for its continual support. According to this doctrine, the offices of Christ signify nothing but with the consent of the will of man. The death of Christ might be wholly an unprofitable sacrifice. The intercession of Christ

in heaven would signify nothing, since they can persevere without him, and notwithstanding his intercession can fall away. This is to unpriest Christ, and destroy the end of his living for ever. His prophetical office fares no better, because they make the efficacy of it depend upon their will; and the teaching of Christ, like the sibyl's writing upon leaves, may be blown away by the next wind. It robs Christ of the key of government, by making every man his own governor in this affair, and denying Christ the sovereign throne in the wills of men. His government would be exercised only in punishing, since none left wholly to themselves, but would prove obstinate rebels. He might be a Priest without a people to sacrifice for, an Advocate without a client, a Prophet without a disciple, and a King without a subject, and so be insignificant in the fruits of all his offices.

(8.) It disparageth the work of the Spirit. As if the Spirit of God did tincture the soul with so weak a colour as might be easily washed off by the next shower; as if he did only strew, not sow the seed of grace, easily to be blown away by the next puff of wind, or devoured by fowls. Are the divine image and workmanship of heaven, the products of infinite power, wisdom, and love, of so slight a make, as the embracers of this doctrine would fancy? Is the Spirit too weak to hold, or is he unwilling? Would Christ ever send so uncertain a comforter, as he would be, unless he did abide with us? Would Christ, after laying so strong and rich a foundation for the redemption of his people, send a deputy that should build so weakly, and work so slightly upon it? The Spirit was to glorify Christ, John xvi. 13. How? Certainly,

as Christ glorified the Father, John xvii. 4. But Christ glorified the Father by finishing the work which was given him. Therefore the Spirit will glorify Christ in the same manner by finishing the work he is sent to do: as the Father is not imperfect in his choice, nor Christ in his purchase; so neither will the Spirit be imperfect in his conduct. The very end why God puts the Spirit into the heart, is to preserve the believer from going back from God. What is called putting the fear of the Lord into us that we might not depart from him, Jer. xxxii. 40, is called putting a new heart and a new spirit: "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27, and a putting his own Spirit within them to preserve and assist that new habitual grace, for it is to cause them to walk in his statutes. It is not only a cleansing them from their filthiness, and then leaving them to be their own guides, but it is a putting a contrary principle into them; and the end of putting this Spirit into them is, that they should live till they be placed in their own land, in the heavenly Canaan, Ezek. xxxvii. 14, and be settled there in the work of admiration, and blessing God for his faithfulness in performing this covenant; then shall ye know, by a full experience, that I the Lord have spoken, and performed it. I know some understand it of their deliverance from the Babylonish captivity; but the words methinks seem to be of a higher import, and the deliverance from Babylon was typical of redemption by Christ, Jer. xxiii. 6—8, speaking of the days of the gospel: "The Lord liveth that brought up the seed of Israel out of the north country." I leave

you to judge; however take it as an allusion. The Spirit will be no more false to God in not answering the end of his being put into the heart, to cause us to walk in his statutes, than Christ was or can be false to God in not answering the end of his designation to the mediatorial office. This doctrine doth quite subvert the end of the Spirit's coming and being put into the heart of a renewed man, and makes all its work a slight and superficial business.

For a close then of this. This doctrine stands firm, I hope. Though it be possible and probable, and I may say certain, that the habit of grace in a renewed man, considered abstractedly in itself, without God's powerful assistance, would fall, and be overwhelmed by the batteries of Satan, and secret treacheries of the flesh, yet it is impossible it should wholly fall, being supported by God's truth in his covenant, his power in the performance, held up by the intercession of Christ, and maintained by the inhabitation of the Spirit. Our wills are mutable, but God's promise unchangeable; our strength is feeble, God's power insuperable; our prayers impotent, Christ's intercessions prevalent. Our sins do meritoriously expel it, but the grace of God through the merit of Christ doth efficiently preserve it. If therefore believers fall totally and finally, it must be by themselves, or by the industry of some external agent.

[1.] Not by themselves, and their own wills. Not as considered in themselves, but as their wills are the proper subject and seat of this habitual grace. They are made willing in the day of his power, Psa. cx. 3. And they are continued willing by the influence of the same power, for the day of

his power endures for ever. They will not depart out of Christ's hand, because it is the chief part of this grace to determine their wills (and to bring down every high imagination which might pervert their wills) to a subjection to Christ, and fix them upon God as the chief good, and last end. Hence being his sheep, and knowing him for their Shepherd, they are said to hear his voice, and follow him; so that this perseverance is not a forced and constrained work. They cannot totally fall by their own wills, they are renewed and strengthened; nor by their own corruption, that is subdued and mortified by the Spirit of God, which is continually in arms against it; and if when it was in its full strength, it could not hinder the power of God's grace in conversion, surely when it is thus impaired, and only some relics of it (though alas! too too much) abiding, it can less resist the power of the same grace in our preservation.

Again, not by their own wills, for it is here that grace sets its throne, and establisheth the heart. Neither doth that life which is hid with Christ in God, depend upon the levity of our wills; it being an abiding life, it hath an influence upon our wills to preserve them in a due bent, wherein they are set by the Spirit.

[2.] Not by any external agent.

Not by God. The counsel of his election stands firm: and they are heirs by an immutable covenant. Though God by reason of his omnipotent sovereignty might justifiably take grace away, and we deserve it, yet morally in regard of the immutability of his righteousness and truth, he will not. Christ will not do it. He died to purchase it, and lives for ever to preserve it. The Spirit will not do it;

the end of his coming and indwelling is to maintain it.

Not by the devil; for he that is in us is greater and stronger than he that is in the world, 1 John iv. 4; in all the allurements and affrightments of the world. Not by his temptations; they shall either be intercepted or resisted by an assisting grace stronger than their author's malice: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

[3.] Not by the world. If the God of the world cannot do it, the world itself shall not be able. Christ hath conquered the world for us by his death, John xvi. 33, and hath given us power to conquer it by our faith, 1 John v. 4.

Second Use. *Matter of Comfort.*

This doctrine of the preservation of grace is the crown, glory, and sweetness of all other privileges. Without it we should, in the midst of regeneration, justification, adoption, droop and be tormented with fears of losing them: it is the assurance of this that makes believers come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. Premise this I must; this comfort belongs only to those that have true grace: see therefore whether you can find any saving work upon your hearts towards God, before you entitle yourselves to the comfort of this doctrine.

1. Our state by redemption and regeneration is better than Adam's by creation, in respect of permanency, though not of present integrity. God keeps us safer in a state of imperfection, than Adam was in all his innocence. Adam had a better

nature, and a stronger inherent power conferred upon him by creation; he was created after God's image, but he defaced and lost it, and afterwards begat in his own likeness, not in the likeness of God, whereof he was stript. He had a natural power, but no supernatural assistance. We have no natural power, but we have a supernatural help. Our supernatural assistance confers upon us a better state than his natural power did, or could do upon him. We are kept by the power of God to salvation, and he was to be kept by his own. He was to stand by the strength of nature, we by the strength of grace:—Grace wherein you stand, through faith, Rom. v. 2: "By faith ye stand," 2 Cor. i. 24. Grace is as immutable, as nature is changeable. He was under the government of his own free-will; it is our happiness to be under the conduct of the Son of God by his Spirit: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," Rom. viii. 14; and that by virtue of a charge, a privilege never allowed to Adam, nor angels, who being their own keepers, were soon their own destroyers. He had a natural power to stand, but without a will; we have a gracious power to will, and the act of perseverance conferred upon us. He had a power to stand, precepts to stand, promises to encourage him to stand, but not one promise to secure him from falling; we have both a supernatural help, and an immutable promise, that the fear of God should be put into our hearts, to this end, to preserve us from falling, Jer. xxxii. 40. By Christ we have not only words of grace to encourage us, but the power of grace to establish us; not only precepts to persevere, but promises that we shall. Otherwise the promise could be no

surer than that annexed to the covenant of works. If the condition of it might be as easily lost as the condition of Adam's covenant, then would the new covenant lose its end, which was to ensure the promise to all the seed: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, that the promise might be sure to all the seed," Rom. iv. 16. Adam was under a mutable covenant, and we under an everlasting one. Adam had no reserve of nature to supply nature upon any defect; we have out of Christ's fulness, grace for grace, John i. 16. Grace for the supply of grace upon any emergency. The manner whereby we stand is different from the manner of his standing; he stood in dependence on his original righteousness, which being once lost, all the original virtues depending on that, were lost with it. Our state is secured in higher hands. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. All which are dispensed to us in the streams, but reserved in him as the fountain. He is made all those to us, not we to ourselves. Adam's life was hid in himself; ours with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3. Our life is as secure in Christ, as Christ's is secure in God. Christ's hand and his Father's bosom are not to be rifled by any power on earth. Heaven is no place to be pillaged by the serpent. Which state then is best? Our nature is restored by the second Adam fundamentally better; not at present so bright as his, but more permanent. The mutability of the first Adam procured our misery; the strength of the second preserves our security. So that a gracious man is better established in his little grace,

by the power of God, than Adam in his flourishing integrity by the strength of his own will.

2. The state of a regenerate man is as secure as the state of the invisible church, and more firm than that of any particular visible church in the world. You stand upon as good terms as the whole assembly of the first-born, and upon a surer foundation than any particular church: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides for ever," Psa. cxxv. 1. They shall be impregnable. As stable as that mountain of the Lord's house, which was to be established on the top of the mountains, Isa. ii. 2; alluding to that temple built upon mount Moriah, of a steep ascent; firmer than all the worldly powers and strongest monarchies, compared to mountains in scripture. Particular churches may fall. How is the glory of many of them vanished! Particular believers shall not, because their standing is in Christ, by virtue of that covenant whereof Christ is Mediator, and of that promise made to the whole body, wherein the interest of every member is included: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 18. Neither the power nor policy of hell: gates being the seats of judgment, and magazines of arms. The visible church is only so by profession and privileges; an invisible member is so by nature and union. Appearances will expire, when nature shall abide. The mystical body of Christ, and any member of it, can no more die, than the natural body of Christ can now, or any member of that. No member of Christ's fleshly body did or shall see corruption. The union between the soul and the body is natural by the band of vital spirits;

the knot between a true member and Christ is supernatural. The second Person in the Trinity, being united to the body of Christ, kept it from corruption. The third Person in the Trinity keeps the union between Christ and a mystical member from dissolving, which no particular church in the world, as a church, can lay claim to. Though Christ may discard a particular church, yet not a particular elect person, because of that agreement between his Father and himself concerning those given to him. But we read not of any whole nation or church in the world given to Christ as such, and in such a manner as a particular person is. There is a difference between God's electing a people to have the gospel preached, and his electing a person to have the gospel wrought in him. The standing of any particular church is not for itself, but for the elect in it. When God chooseth a nation to be under the preaching of the gospel, it is for the sake of his elect ones sprinkled among them. And that church stands as long as there are elect persons among them to be brought in; when the number is gathered into God's fold, the gospel is removed thence, because of the rejection of it by the rest. These two elections of persons and nations, the one to grace, and the other to the enjoyment of the ministry of the gospel, are mixed together by the apostle in his discourse, Rom. xi. Some places must be understood of the one, and some of the other. When the election is said to be void, it is meant of the election of a nation, as the Jews are called God's chosen people. When it is said to stand, it is meant of the election of a person: as when we say, man is mortal, and man is immortal, in different senses both are true;

mortal according to his body, immortal in respect of his soul.

3. Comfort against the weakness of grace. This is the proper comfort of this doctrine. It is, and ought to be a matter of trouble that our grace is so weak; but it should not be a matter of murmuring and despondency. We have reason to mourn that our graces are not strong; we have reason to rejoice that we have any at all. Little grace is enrolled in heaven. Not a weak member of the invisible church, but hath his name written there, Heb. x. 23. How glimmering was the disciples' faith! yet our Saviour bids them, in all that weakness, "Rejoice that their names were written in heaven," Luke x. 20. Could their names have been blotted out again, the joy he exhorts them to could not have dwelt with such a ground of fear. As the least sin beloved, brings us into alliance with the devil; so the least grace cherished, entitles us to the family of God; and it is but a rough draught with blots of what God hath fairly drawn in the glorified saints. The weakest grace gives a deadly wound to sin, and a sure, though not so highly comfortable a title to so abundant an entrance into heaven as a stronger. Do not therefore seek your torment, where you should find your comfort.

(1.) The foundation of weak grace, and the hopes of it, are strong. Every new creature hath not equal strength, but every one hath an equal interest in the covenant, and as sure a ground of hope as the highest. The design of God was to make the new covenant secure from the violations of the creature: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; not according to the covenant

I made with their fathers, which my covenant they brake, though I was an husband to them," Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. He would make a covenant stronger than to be broken by them. That covenant was perpetual, in regard of God, for he continued a husband to them, and did nothing to dissolve the union. This is not to be broken by a person in covenant. If it could be broken, it would be the same with the other covenant, though not in terms, yet in the issue. Now true grace depends upon this covenant: "I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," ver. 33. Besides, this covenant and the blessings of it are settled upon believers, and every one of them, as an inheritance: "I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee: for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 9, 10; and that by oath. It could not have been made over in surer terms. Mountains, the stablest parts of the creation, that cannot be blown away by storms, shall depart at the end of the world; this covenant shall not. It proceeds not only from love, but kindness, which is love spread with a choicer affection. It is a covenant of peace, wherein their reconciliation with God, and the blessings following from it, are settled upon them, and that as an heritage: "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord," ver. 17; and lest they should fall, or lose their righteousness, the latter clause secures them; "and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Whether you understand it of the righteousness of justification or sanctification, it amounts to the same thing.

This is the sure mercies of David. So that thou hangest upon a covenant settled fast by the promise and oath of God, and cemented in every part by the Mediator's blood. God never yet broke his word. It depends upon promise; eternal life was promised before the foundation of the world: "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began," Tit. i. 2; to whom? To Christ, and in him to all the elect of what size or stature soever, babes as well as strong men. God had time to consider all that inconceivable eternity before Christ came, and yet he never repented of this promise of eternal life; because he cannot lie, which the apostle lays an emphasis upon. When Christ came, all his actions and speeches upon record were pursuant to the confirmation of this promise. The Lamb, in whose bosom you are carried, was slain from the foundation of the world in the decree of God, and voluntary designation of himself. Was there not a long time to consider? and did he not repent of it all that time? and will he now, since he has paid all the price for your grace, and the continuance of it? Can a little time, sixteen hundred years* since Christ was in the flesh, make any alteration in God's counsel, and Christ's design, which eternity could not? Besides, the root is strong, though the branch be weak: buds draw sap from the root, as well as the forwarder fruit. The least splinter of wood in a tree is a part of the tree. The least atom, though ever so small, is a part of the world. Every one in Christ is a part of Christ, and hath a share in the promise made to him. Is there any

* Now eighteen hundred.—Ed.

distinction or difference made in the covenant between weak and strong? The babe in Christ is as well within the verge of it, as the most complete christian. Never then sadden your souls if you find true grace in yourselves, when you are within the arms of an everlasting covenant. The grace which lies smoking in the chaff, hath fire in it, as well as that which flames.

(2.) All grace, now triumphant, was weak at first. The highest began in a seed, a little seed. The waters of the sanctuary, whereby the propagation of the gospel in the world, and the operation of it in the heart is figured; I say, those waters which will perfectly purify the soul, did at first reach but to the ancles, after that to the loins, and afterwards to the height of waters to swim in, Ezek. xlvii. 3—5. Till you read of any grace in scripture without its mixtures, do not despond. Moses had the encomium of being God's familiar friend; yet though he struck the rock through faith, he struck twice through unbelief, when indeed he was only to speak, not strike, Num. xx. 8. 11, which God reckoned unbelief, ver. 12. Abraham, who is honoured with the noble title of the father of the faithful, had a distrust of God's promise: "I will make of thee a great nation, I will bless thee; I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee," Gen. xii. 2, 3: therefore he deals with his wife to call herself his sister, for fear of his life in Pharaoh's court, ver. xii. 12, 13. And after much more experience of God's truth, in the court of Abimelech, Gen. xx. 11.

(3.) Your stock is sure. Your grace is weak, but the stock in Christ's hands for supply is full. He keeps it in his own hands. He knows our

necessity better than we do; and measures supplies by his own wisdom, not by our desires; for he feeds them with judgment, Ezek. xxxiv. 16; that is, he will govern them wisely: for so that place may be understood. It is our happiness, that though we have little in possession, we have much for our necessity. It is our happiness that it is laid so high, that we cannot reach it but by faith; that we have it not in our hands to squander it away. Were it in our own hands, it would quickly be out of them, and we not have a mite left. The covenant with us, was founded upon that made with Christ: "This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever," Isa. lix. 21. "This is my covenant with them," that is, made with us in Christ. "My Spirit that is upon thee," &c. As long as Christ hath the Spirit by virtue of that everlasting mediatorial covenant, so long shall the Spirit, and the fruits, and power of the gospel, be in the hearts of his people. The words in the mouth of his seed, depend upon the word put into his mouth, and the Spirit put upon him. The covenant was made with Christ, not for himself, but for his seed, and his seed's seed; made with them, but founded upon him. It was for their sakes the Spirit was put upon him; for their sakes that words were put into his mouth; for their sakes for whom he sanctified himself, John xvii. 19, even for the sakes of those weak disciples, he then prayed for. The words put into his mouth were not bare words, but attended with the Spirit;

not mere professions, but operative. And this was to abide upon him for them, henceforth, and for ever: for he calls it a covenant with them, yet turns and speaks to one person. It must therefore be for them, that this person is endowed with the Spirit, otherwise it was not a covenant with them.

(4.) Christ's charge extends to this weak grace. It was for this reason he hath the order given him in the text by his Father, not for the standing reed or flaming flax, though that is included. The weakest is here committed to him, and therefore is under his care. To what purpose hath Christ this order, if the weakness of grace were a ground of despondency? It is a ground of humiliation, but not of distrust. The gardener who regards all his ground, watcheth over the tenderest plants. Our keeper riseth early to look after the tender grapes and pomegranate buds, Cant. vii. 12. That which is feeble is as much under his care as that which is vigorous. He was ordered to be a shepherd, whose office is to attend the weak motions of the new fallen lambs. His bosom is appointed a place for them; he gathereth them by his arms; that is, converts them by his power, and was to carry them in his bosom: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isa. xl. 11. If you can go, he is to guide you gently; if you cannot, he is to bear you tenderly; not on his shoulders, merely by strength, but in his bosom with a tender affection. He is not only the Shepherd, but Bishop of our souls, 1 Pet. ii. 25. And our conversion to him makes us part of his diocese: "You are returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls"

In all your weakness he was ordained by God for your help, Psa. lxxxix. 19, he laid help upon one that is mighty: mighty to preserve his power, and mighty to use it. Help supposeth persons most in need of it, as the objects to whom it is to be afforded. Every new creature hath not equal strength, but they have an equal interest in the Redeemer's death and merit, and the weakest may seem more under his care than the strongest, because they stand more in need of that office which he is intrusted with, and delights to exercise.

(5.) He delights in this charge. It was his delight to do the will of God, yea, and his meat and drink to cherish the beginnings of grace in the Samaritan woman, John iv. 34, because it was his Father's work. Surely it was no small part of the joy set before him, that upon his dying he was to be invested with a power to perform his Father's charge. He will not therefore refuse to embrace the feeblest saint. He knew how well the soul of his Father was pleased with his undertaking this care of the smoking flax, as the words intimate: "My Beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased," Matt. xii. 18; pleased with that which Christ was to do, whereof that in the text is a part. God takes particular notice of the beginnings of grace, and Christ's affection runs in the same channel with his Father's. Yea, he regards the very trembling degrees of it. He overlooks all the philosophers at Athens, who boasted themselves to be the grandees in learning, and records only two new converts, Dionysius, Acts xvii. 34, who for all his ability and justice in judging controversies, had never had his name set down there, but for his faith; and Damaris, a woman. He joins a woman

with a judge, to show that he takes notice of the weakest faith, as well as that which is joined with the strongest parts; this great man is mentioned only upon account of his faith. See also how he overlooks the infirmities of Job: "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" Job ii. 3, though he knew them as well as his graces; and doth not only approve of him, and defend him, but makes his boast of him. He makes a public proclamation with joy in the very teeth of the devil. Though he had so many pure angels about him, that one would think he should have spoken of with applause, as well as of a poor mortal. Was Job's grace very strong? what means then that multitude of impatient expressions scattered in the book?

(6.) He will therefore be faithful in it. His faithfulness is more illustrious in regarding the more troublesome parts of his charge; as the fidelity of a friend or servant is more evidenced by the difficulty than facility of his trust. When he knew how weak we are, and how apt to swerve, had he not been resolved to relieve us, he had never sent his Spirit to abide with us for such an end. The apostle assures us, that the care lies upon him still to confirm us to the end: "Who shall also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus," 1 Cor. i. 8; in the day, not before; expect not grace to be triumphant till then. Wherein the faithfulness of God also bears a part, ver. 9. And surely those Corinthians were none of the strongest, when the apostle doubts whether he should write to them as spiritual, or as unto carnal. The weakest is his seed, and he will not lose it. You cannot value your security more than Christ values the honour

of his office, and it being his Father's pleasure that he should exercise it, it doth more affect him than the desires of your security can affect you. Suppose he himself had no love to grace, yet you cannot doubt, but that he hath so much respect to his Father, as not to displease him by a neglect of that which he solemnly committed to him as a pledge of his affection, and a testimony of his confidence in him. He will also be faithful to his own glory; but the fulfilling of the work of faith with power is for the glory of his name, 2 Thess. i. 11, 12. It is one part of the glory he reserves to himself, to be admired not only by them that believe, but in them at the last day, ver. 10; admired in the admirable conduct of their faith through all weaknesses and difficulties.

(7.) He has given evidences of this faithfulness. He never yet put out a dim candle, that was lighted at the Sun of righteousness.

[1.] It was his course in the world. He found some smoking flax in the ruler: "Come down, and heal my son; come down ere my child die," John iv. 47. 49. He thought Christ could cure his son, there was some fire of faith; but not unless he came to his house, and that before he died too, as if Christ could not recover him by a word, and could not restore him after his breath was expired. Christ, according to his office of not quenching smoking flax, complies with him. So Mark vii. 32. Their faith thought Christ could cure their friends, but not unless he laid his hands upon them; yet he grants their requests. He easily complies with a weak faith, when he loves to put a strong one to its trials. As he did in the repulse he gave to the woman of Canaan, whose faith afterwards

he applauds with admiration; "O woman, great is thy faith!"

[2.] It was his disposition after his resurrection, Luke xxiv. He meets with two disciples going to Emmaus, who seem to have thrown away all their faith and hope in him, and to be upon the brink of the sin against the Holy Ghost: "We trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel," ver. 21. The next words in course were like to have been, But we think him an impostor. But doth Christ with indignation cast them off, as though he would have no more to do with them? No, he takes pains to enliven their faith, and takes occasion from their weakness to renew their strength; and that in so eminent a manner, that it seems to be one of the most excellent sermons that ever he preached: a comment upon the whole scripture concerning himself, ver. 27. Beginning at Moses, he went through all the prophets, and expounded all the scriptures concerning himself. He filled their heads with knowledge, and inspired their hearts with life.

[3.] After his ascension too. He takes notice of a little strength in Philadelphia, Rev. iii. 8, and opens a door for it that no man can shut. Did our Redeemer ever yet disappoint a trembling faith, or let a limping grace go from him without a blessing? No: and it is too late surely for him to begin now, at the close of all things, when the world is almost at an end.

(8.) Therefore you may in the weakest state expect assistance. The weakest grace hath a throne of grace to supply it, a God of grace to delight in it, a Mediator of grace to influence it, a Spirit of grace to brood upon it. Though our

grace be weak, yet the grace of all these are sufficient to preserve us. The weakest grace in Christ's hand shall stand, when the strongest nature without his guard shall fail. It is not our hold of Christ so much preserves us, as Christ's hold of us; though the faith we hang by be a weak thread, yet Christ hath a strong hand. Had you the grace of a glorified saint, you could not maintain it without his help, and that is sufficient to conduct through the greatest storms into a safe harbour. The preserved in Christ is the happy title of those that are sanctified by God the Father, as Jude speaks: "To them that are sanctified in God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." His mercy is in the heavens, his righteousness, as the great mountain, stable, his title issuing from thence is, The preserver of man and beast, Psa. xxxvi. 5, 6. And shall not that which is more valued by him than man and beast, that which is the cause of his keeping up the world, be preserved by him? "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy one of Israel," Isa. xli. 14. What hath more need to fear than a worm, that is liable to be trod on by every passenger? What hath more reason to fear than a creeping grace in itself? Yet what hath less reason to be afraid, when backed by such a mighty power? It is a weakness, but fortified by almighty strength; it hath a power which neither Adam with all his nature, nor the holy angels before their confirmation, were ever possessed of.

Well then, the weaker thy grace, the faster let thy dependence be on Christ, and then thou wilt be more secure by that exercise of faith than by the strongest grace without it. A small vessel, managed

by a skilful pilot, may be preserved in a rough sea, when a stronger, left to itself, will dash in pieces.

4. Comfort against corruptions. Indwelling and easily besetting sin is that which makes a believer hang down his head. Oh this enemy within me that I cannot conquer! surely I shall one day die by the hand of Saul. It is our unbelief and the ignorance of the great transaction between God and Christ, and the tenour of the covenant of grace, which is the ground of all the practical doubts about this doctrine, as well as the notional disputes against it. Every member, though it hath boils and wounds, is as much a member of the body as the soundest, till it be cut off, and that it shall not, hath been the design of the whole discourse to prove. Christ doth not cut it off, but heal it. Is it not a part of the covenant of grace to heal our backslidings? Hos. xiv. 4. When he finds a disease, he cures us by the application of his blood, for the end of his stripes was that we might be healed, Isa. liii. 5. And though God hath a piercing eye to see every sin and the malignity of every circumstance, yet the motion of his eye that way is not to destroy, but to heal: "I have seen his ways, and will heal him, though he walked frowardly," Isa. lvii. 17, 18. We speak not now of a course of gross sins. No true believer can be guilty of that; there is a great difference between fouling the feet in the mire, and a total wallowing in it like a swine with delight and pleasure.

Therefore consider that,

(1.) Christ's charge extends to this too. Is his charge not to break the bruised reed? He is by the same reason to provide against that which would break it. Is he not to quench the smoking flax?

Then he is also to prevent the extinction of it by any other cause. The charge cannot be supposed only to tie his own hands from doing it. Such a comfort would be of a small value, while we were endangered by powerful enemies. But this charge arms him with a commission, and lays a necessity upon him to prevent the breaking and quenching of it by any other hand, and therefore obligeth him to withstand that which is most able and most likely to do it; namely, indwelling sin. Though the devil be our great external enemy, yet this is our greatest internal, without whose assistance the keenest arrows of the devil would be shot at rovers, and be uncertain in their effects. Christ therefore undertaking the work, undertakes every part of the charge, and this among the rest. The conquest of this in the soul was the reason of the oblation of himself: "Who gave himself for us," not only to redeem from iniquity, "but to purify unto himself a peculiar people," Tit. ii. 14. Is it agreeable to the wisdom of Christ, to neglect the main end of his undertaking, which was to make an end of sin? Dan. ii. 4. What end is there if it recover its loss, and regain its empire in a believing soul? It were in vain for him to go to heaven to prepare mansions for believers, and send his Spirit to prepare them for those mansions, if corruption should get a full head, which would incapacitate them for ever possessing those mansions. Would he be worthy of the name of Saviour, yea, and Salvation, a title God conferred upon him in the past ages, if he should not save those that have the mark of God upon them from that corruption, without which deliverance they could not enjoy any real benefit of his purchased salvation? You have no reason

to question his power, and as little to suspect his faithfulness. The distrust of either is an unworthy reflection upon that God who chose him for this work, and upheld him in it. Infinite wisdom and immutable goodness would never have pitched upon a person, for the restoration of mankind, of a dubious fidelity. This were to disparage his wisdom, sully the glory of his mercy, and render the designs of his goodness insignificant. Shall not this great Person be thought fit to be trusted by us against our enemies, when we have both his own word and his Father's for his willingness and ability, whom God thought fit to trust with a power against the greatest enemy he had in the world, upon his own single promise? It is unworthy for us to nourish jealousies of so great a Redeemer, when God who sent him, never had cause to have the least suspicion of him. Let me then beg this of any desponding soul, not to distrust the Redeemer's faithfulness, till you meet with a person of more unblemished fidelity to confide in.

(2.) He has an enmity against your corruptions. Sin hath done more wrong to God than ever it did to us. Can it be thought then, that he should let so injurious an enemy reign in the hearts of any that love God, and are beloved by him? Your hatred against it cannot be so great as his, because you cannot arrive to an equality of holiness with him; the greater the holiness, the greater the hatred to any thing contrary to it. Our High Priest is holy, separate from sinners, and therefore made higher than the heavens, Heb. vii. 26. Separate from sin too, in all kinds of affection. Letting sin reign in them for whom he is a Priest is inconsistent with the holiness of his office. Had he not

had an indignation against sin, and a pity to the sinner, he would have spared both the trouble of coming and the pains of dying.

(3.) His residence in heaven is an evidence that this corruption shall be destroyed. "The heavens must receive him till the times of restitution of all things," Acts iii. 21. Till the time of the perfection of all things, so Hesychius. His being there is an evidence that things shall be restored to a perfect state. It was promised by God from the beginning of the world, all the prophecies were designed to declare it, that those things deformed by the devil should be restored to their primitive lustre. Things cannot be restored till sin be destroyed, grace fully completed, Satan put out of all dominion; in a word, all his enemies put under his feet; and we have the greatest assurance of this; for God hath repeated it again and again by all the prophets from the beginning of the world, as if God's thoughts ran especially upon this, and we know that the spirit of prophecy was the testimony of Jesus; as it is called, Rev. xix. 10. A witness of what Christ was to do. He hath the government to restore things. If every thing is to be restored, believers certainly shall not be left out. It was his main design to expel unbelief and sin out of the hearts of his disciples by his gracious exhortations when he was in the world; much more will he do it by his power conferred upon him since his resurrection, and possessed by him upon his ascension. He sits King in heaven to restore this.

(4.) It is his glory to conquer them. The stronger our corruptions are, the firmer ground hath Christ to glorify his strength in our weakness.

If they were not so strong, and sin so foul, redemption would not appear so plenteous. His office is chiefly exercised about those; when those are fully conquered in all the elect, his office ceaseth, and the kingdom is to be resigned to the Father. Till then he is a Shepherd, and in that respect his office is to find his sheep out when they wander, and bring them home. If he came to seek that which was lost, it is no less for his honour to preserve that which he hath found. The choicer the thing, and the stronger the opposition, the more glory accrues to the preserver of it. Is it for his honour to begin a work in thee, and start back from it? Is it likely he would ever have struck a stroke at those hard hearts of ours, if he did not intend to make thorough work with them? He never yet did any work by halves, and shall he begin now?

(5.) It is already condemned by him. God condemned sin in the flesh by the sacrifice of Christ: "And for sin condemned sin in the flesh," Rom. viii. 3. As at his death there was a general condemnation of sin in its nature, so upon faith in this sacrifice, our faith in his blood, there is a particular condemnation of sin in its power, as an unrighteous thing, and not fit by reason of its malignity, to have a standing there. He condemned it by his holiness in the law, by his justice in the death of Christ, and by his mercy in the renewing of thy nature, which is always accompanied with a condemnation, and in part, an execution of sin. When the guilt of thy sin was pardoned, the power of thy sin was condemned. As the pardon of the one will not be reversed, so neither shall the condemnation of the other. If it be condemned by our Saviour in his flesh it will be conquered in us by his Spirit; for

whatsoever was done by Christ as Mediator in his person, was an evidence of what he would do by his Spirit in his members according to their capacity. Hence they are said to be crucified, risen, ascended, and to sit in heavenly places with him, not only virtually in him, as their Head, but spiritually in themselves. Shall a dying, gasping sin overpower a living, thriving grace? Sin therefore shall be conquered. The Father by his Spirit will purge away the worms and suckers which may hinder the growth and ripening of the fruit: "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit," John xv. 2. If a branch, though it be small, he will take care to remove the hinderance to its fruitfulness. God foresaw what infirmities thou wouldest have, before he gave Christ this commission; and Christ foresaw them before his acceptance of the charge. If their prescience could not stop God in his gift, nor cool Christ in his acceptance, why should it now.

But,

[1.] This conquest is by degrees. It is victory promised in the text, therefore a conflict is implied, and must be endured. Victory doth not attend the beginning of a war just at the heels. Some time must be allowed between the smoke and flame. Christ must not quench the smoke; but grace may smoke, and only smoke for a while. His charge is to keep that which is committed to him, not presently to overthrow its enemies. He will eye his authority and instructions, as he is God's Servant; for as he hath received a commandment from his Father, John xiv. 31, so he acts. He will not perfect it in an instant, but at length he will.

Light, and a fulness of it, is sown for the righteous. It is but sown, time must be allowed between that and the harvest. The new creation is not perfected at once, any more than the old was. Can you expect your Saviour should make quicker work with you than with his disciples when he was upon the earth? It was his pleasure not to reduce them presently to a perfect state. Neither can we expect more than our Saviour prayed for, which was not that you should be without foils to your faith, but without the failing of your faith. He did not desire his Father presently to take them out of a world of sin, or sin presently from them, but to preserve them under it, from being conquered by it. God works to will and to do, but of his own good pleasure. Not as we please, but as he himself pleaseth.

[2.] Yet while thy infirmities do continue, the love of God to thee is not hindered by them. The incorruptible seed, which is his own, will more prevail to draw out his love, than thy infirmities to engage his hatred against thee. When Christ hung upon the cross with all the sins of believers about him, God did not withdraw his love from him, because of that righteousness, holiness, and love to God found in him; yet he withdrew his comfortable presence, to show his hatred of sin. As God dealt with the Head, so he will with the members. Especially if your hearts begin to hanker after any sin; though he hath engaged not to take away his loving-kindness from you, yet he may withdraw his comfort, till you have repented of your sin. He may chastise you with rods, but will not suffer his faithfulness to fail. He will, as a mother, raise you when you fall, but chide you for

your carelessness, to cause you to take more heed. Christ seems to have had as much reason to cast off his disciples, as ever he had to cast off any believing soul since. None could ever forsake him in such extremity as they did, for his person will never be in the like straits again. Yet having once loved them, he loved them to the end, and after the end, after his resurrection, as appears by viewing the history. And it is to be observed, that though their unbelief, ignorance, and pride did often fume from them in the presence of their Master, yet Christ mentions none of them in his prayer to his Father; only their grace: "They have kept thy word; they have believed that thou didst send me," John xvii. 6, 8. They had indeed received the word of God, but it was lodged in souls very muddy.

[3.] While they do continue, God by his wisdom and grace draws profit to you from them. The very stirring of one sin is sometimes the ruin of another; a gross sin sometimes is the occasional break-neck of spiritual pride. The high thoughts Peter had conceived of himself upon the confession of Christ, were not scattered, till he had as shamefully denied him, as before he had gloriously confessed him. The thorn in the flesh of the apostle Paul, whether it was an outward temptation, or inward corruption, kept him upon his level from being lifted up above measure. Thus doth Christ make good his charge by ordering things so by his wisdom, that that which would in itself quench the smoking flax, is an occasional means to inflame it. The fogs which threaten the choking the sun, make his heat more vigorous after the dispersion of those vapours. Neither can sin, because it hath no

positive being, be excluded from the number of those things which by the over-ruling grace of God are ordered to our good, Rom. viii. 28, though it be ot so in its own nature, since the penmen of scripture spake not alway according to the rules and terms of philosophy

For a close therefore of this :—Perhaps it is our own fault that our corruptions are no more shattered. God hath given you success against some sin. But have your hearts been as much elevated in praise for it, as they were before fervent in prayer? If corruption gather strength, charge not God with want of love, but yourselves with want of thankfulness. Prayer procures mercy, but praise is a means to continue it. As we must depend upon his strength for a victory, so we must acknowledge his strength in our success; else he may withdraw his power, and our enemies may thereupon re-assume new life, and assault us with a greater courage. Again, let not anything you have heard of the faithfulness and power of Christ make you neglect your duty. Let Asaph be your pattern, Psa. lxxiii. who after a strong conflict with sin, had an assurance that God would guide him by his counsel to glory, ver. 24. This makes him not lazy, but quickens him into a resolve, that it was good, and good for him too to draw nigh to God, ver. 28. God is ready with his counsel to guide us, but we must be ready with our petitions.

Third Use. *Matter of Duty.*

1. How should men labour to get into a state of grace! To get within the verge of Christ's commission, into such a security which may at last bring them to an eternal triumph over death and hell! Security of estate, and security of person

and interest, is the main intendment of men in the world. But security of soul is least in men's thoughts. Should not this latter be as seriously minded? Were there a strong tower wherein they might be infallibly preserved in the time of hostile invasion, and be out of the reach of the enemy's battery, how greedy would men be to get under the shelter! Such a strong tower is the name of the Lord, and those that put their trust in him shall be safe both against open invasion and secret stratagems: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe," Prov. xviii. 10. By the name of the Lord, the Jews understand in this place, and in many other, the Messiah appointed for the security of the righteous. Methinks every natural man should run with all haste into his closet, fall upon his knees, and not rise till he hath that grace which is by God's order the subject of Christ's tender care. Methinks he should cry and groan, sigh and pray, till he have at least some smoking flax. There is no medium; we must either be under the conduct of Christ, or the government of the devil. If we are in our natural state, we are not enrolled in Christ's family. There is nothing for Christ, but enough for the devil to make victorious. Smoking grace shall grow into a flame of love, and smoking sins into a flame of wrath. Smoking grace is under his care, and smoking sins under his vengeance. As at the last Christ shall come to be admired in all them that believe, that is, in the conduct of them through grace to happiness, so he shall be admired too in the vengeance he shall take upon all them that obey not the gospel, 2 Thess. i. 8, 10.

2. Examine whether you have grace or not. It

is not lost time to inquire whether you have this victorious principle. Put these questions to your souls:—Have I a sincere resolution to discard my former sin? Do I most abhor my darling lusts? Is the burden of this body of death my greatest grief? Do I esteem Christ above all the world? Would I rather be under the gracious government of Christ, than be the greatest prince in the world without it? Do I reckon God my chief good, and delight in spiritual converse with him, above thousands of gold and silver? Have I a relish of the things of God above all the pleasures of sense? Is the knowledge of God, and excitation of my affections towards him, my chief delight? Try it by its activity. It is a true maxim, To be without operation, is not to be. If there be not the operation, there is not the essence of grace. It is impossible so active a being as that should lie idle in the soul; there will be smoke, strong desires, ascents upwards, and aims at a heavenly region, though sometimes it be hindered in its direct ascent by the violence of the winds, as the smoke is. Every creature is active in that which concerns its welfare; grace therefore will be as active as any natural thing whatsoever, according to its degrees, because it is a Divine communication, a participation of the Divine nature. It being more noble, and of a choicer extraction than any other creature, it will be more active to resist the invasions of the devil, and to move towards God as its chief end.

Only take these cautions:

(1.) Judge not of thy want of grace by the not acting of that grace which formerly was very vigorous. One grace may for a time cease to act so sensibly, to give way to the powerful operations of

another. John Baptist did decrease, that Christ might increase. Graces have their particular seasons to traverse the stage of the soul, sometimes love, sometimes hope, sometimes patience, humility, faith, and dependence, sometimes sorrow for sin, sometimes joy, &c.

(2.) Grace may be sometimes oppressed by a temptation, and so may cease a sensible acting; but it will recover itself by degrees.

(3.) If you find upon a diligent search that you have true grace, take heed of nourishing jealousies of God, and unbelieving doubts of the care of Christ over you. We indeed often have our fears of ourselves upon the clouding of our evidences; and when we have reason to question the truth of our grace, we have very good reason to question our standing also. Though we have a clear prospect of our grace, and know it to be true, yet there may be fears in us of what might have been, had we not this security in Christ's commission. As a man upon a high tower, though hemmed in with strong battlements, and sure that he cannot fall, yet when he looks down, he cannot but have some horror and chillness in his blood at the apprehension of what might be, if he had not that protection. Neither do I discourage fears in ourselves, and fears of those things which may weaken our hopes of salvation. For those the apostle joins with a confidence in God: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which works in you both to will and to do," Phil. ii. 12, 13. Fear yourselves, but have confidence in God, a believing fear without an unbelieving jealousy of God's neglect of you. For all doubts of the stability of the covenant, and the perpetual tenderness of God, are

the brood of a natural Pelagianism. Breathe not your unbelieving fears in the face of Christ; it is a wrong to his commission, a disparagement to his Father's wisdom, as if he had placed so great a trust in feeble hands; and a virtual accusing of God and Christ of the greatest falsity imaginable, whereby we make him more base and deceitful than the worst of men; an affronting the main tenour of the covenant of grace, and making the work of redemption to bear no better fruits than that of creation. How languishing will be our love to God, while we have unworthy suspicions of him, that he should love us this day, and be an enemy to us to-morrow! Can we love a man this day, that we fear will the next be our deadly enemy? Let the time spent in such jealous thoughts and complaints of God be spent in duty. Would it not be a trouble to a loving husband, to have his wife complain of her fears of his casting her off after the marriage-knot, and reiterated promises and assurances of his affection? Would she not better engage his affections by a performance of all offices of love and duty towards him?

(4.) Let not this doctrine encourage any remissness in our known duties. Let none encourage themselves to a freedom in sin, and presume upon God's preservation of them without the use of means. No; the electing counsel upon which this victory is founded, chose us to the *means* as well as to the *end*. He that makes such a consequence, I doubt whether ever he was a christian. I may safely say, that any person that hath a settled, resolved, and wilful remissness, never yet was in the covenant of grace, since that promiseth such a fear of God in the heart which is incompatible with a

resolved laziness in duty. It is a new heart and a new spirit, not a lazy heart, that is the intendment of the covenant. The same will which is the seat of grace, can never be the settled seat of the neglects of God. God hath promised a victory; but the very promise of victory implies a war, and commands, as well as encourages, a standing to our arms. Victories are never gained by sleep and laziness; camps may be beat up, and throats cut, if guards be neglected. He that is not under the influence of the doctrine of grace, never had the truth of habitual grace in him. He that hath not learned the lesson which the grace or gospel of God teacheth, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, &c. Tit. ii. 11, 12, was never any proficient in Christ's school, never had any work of grace. It is the nature of grace to be active. It is a divine principle; carnal security is from Satan; darkness and light cannot blend together in intense degrees; Christ and Belial cannot shake friendly hands. Security is never the effect, but the disease of grace, the death of holiness, and the life of sin. That grace which assures us to the end, will make us conscientious in the means to attain it. A partial security is also very dangerous in a christian. It will kill our comfort, though it may not destroy our souls. It will impair the beauty of grace, though not its being. Would any but a madman under a distemper neglect the means to restore his healthfulness, because he was sure to live so long a time?

(5.) Admire the grace of God. How much are we beholden to the grace of God which is at an hourly expense upon us! As his providence is called a continual creation by the efflux of his power, so our preservation in the new state is a

continual regeneration by the influence of his grace. God, in giving thee grace, hath given thee more than if he had given thee all the glory of the world. All other things are managed only by a common providence, this is put more immediately under Christ's charge. By giving thee this, which is a peculiar part of his commission, he hath given thee such a guardian, such an advantage, which could never have been gained by a confluence of all the honours in the world. It is a standing miracle in the world, that all the floods of temptations should not be able to quench this little heavenly spark in the heart; that it should be preserved from being smothered by the steams of sin, which arise in us; that a little smoking flax should smoke and burn in spite of all the buckets of water which are poured upon it. To see a rich jewel in a child's hand, with a troop of thieves about him snatching at it, and yet not able to plunder, would raise an astonishment both in the actors and spectators, and make them conclude an invisible strength that protects the child, and defeats the invaders. Thus God perfects his strength in our weakness, and ordains matter for praise in the mouths and hearts of babes and sucklings.

(6.) Acknowledge thy standing and thy present victories only to be by the grace of God. Give the grace of God its due praise. God hath fixed our standing in Christ, and intrusted and charged him with our preservation, that grace might triumph in the whole christian pilgrimage, till we come to the land of rest; that nothing may be heard either in heaven or earth, but the acclamations of "Grace, Grace!" "God put no trust in his saints," Job xv. 15: in some other person therefore as the

Head of them. The ground of our perseverance is not in ourselves then, since God puts no trust in us, but in another, in the Mediator.

We cannot beat men too much off from themselves, and therefore to strengthen this, take these grounds.

[1.] Grace in its own nature is not immutable, nor independent. Immutability is not intrinsical to grace; neither is it, nor can it be the essential property of any creature, though ever so high. It is a natural perfection belonging only to God. The habit of grace is called an incorruptible seed; not that it is so in its own nature, for it is a creature, and therefore defectible; for mutability is as much belonging to the essence of a creature, as immutability to the essence of God. As it is impossible God should be mutable, so it is impossible a creature should be in its own nature immutable. But grace is immortal in respect of that omnipotent power which doth attend the principle, and spreads its warm wings over it, as the Spirit over the world, to bring it to a perfect beauty and order out of chaos. If grace did not depend upon God in its preservation, but were unchangeable in its own nature, it might be counted as perfect as God, whose only prerogative it is to be independent and immutable in himself. In him we have our being, and in him only we have our firm and stable being.

[2.] The same power that doth create, is necessary to preserve. There is little difference between creation and conservation. The wisdom and power of God is as eminent in the preservation and government of the world, as in the rearing of it. We are no more able to preserve grace, than we are to create it. We cannot preserve our own thoughts,

which are the natural products of our minds, much less so rich a treasure as grace, which is purely supernatural, and in the midst of so many pirates which endeavour to rob us of it. As the first habitual grace is by the operation of God's grace in us, so the daily preservation of it is by his assisting grace, which in a sweet way, and yet efficacious, keeps grace in its station, and carries on the soul to further degrees. As it is the preserving power of God maintains the world, so the auxiliary grace of God maintains grace and all the exercises of it in the heart, which could not else be kept up by all the power of men's wit or will. As the influence of the sun is necessary to all natural productions, preservation, and maturity of them, so is the influence of Christ necessary to all productions and preservations of grace. The righteousness whereby we are justified, and whence our habitual grace doth spring, is laid up in Christ, and our strength too: "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24. Righteousness to justify us, and strength to preserve us; and as he is our Redeemer, laying thereby the foundation of the new creation; so he is our strength whereby it is preserved: "O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer," Psa. xix. 14. The former part of the psalm is by the apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, applied to the times of the gospel. Our redemption and our strength, our righteousness imputed, our righteousness inherent, and our strength are the effects of the same cause. So that we can no more be our own strength, than be our own redeemers; nor be our own strength any more than our own righteousness. When Paul complains of his temptation, God answers him that his grace should be sufficient for

him. Not the habitual grace in Paul, but the assisting grace of God, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Hence it is that the saints in scripture desire so often God to help them, which they need not, if their inherent grace were sufficient to preserve them.

[3.] The standing of those who are in their consummate state in glory, is only by grace as the chief cause. The good angels and blessed souls are confirmed in that state by a superabounding grace; for by nature they are mutable. Was it the contemplation of the face of God that kept the angels firm in that state? What is the reason some of the angels fell who contemplated God's face at the creation as well as those that stood? Or is it that they see no good which they want, being advanced the highest of any creatures? Was not this the case of the fallen angels? What good did they want which was proper to a created state? Besides, confirmation is a positive effect, and therefore must have a positive cause, a privative cause not being sufficient to produce a positive effect. Or do the good angels and glorified saints continue firm to God, because they know that if they sin, they should be eternally miserable? But this doth not become a blessed state, to avoid sin for fear of punishment, rather than love of righteousness. Besides, the happiness of heaven could not be eternal, nor the joy pure, that is mixed with those fears of falling and losing it. Or is it from an affection to the pleasure of the place? Such a selfish principle becomes not the purity of that state. But though their inherent grace, the contemplation of God, and delight in him, may be some means of their standing, and methods God useth, yet those are not sufficient of themselves. It is God in his

incomprehensible grace who preserves them. It is an excellent speech of a holy man of our neighbour nation:* "I am sure if my feet were in heaven, and Christ should say, Defend thyself, I will hold thee no longer, I should go no further, but presently fall down in many pieces of dead nature." If you can find one saint who in that place of glory ascribes the beginning or perfection of his salvation to himself, then glory in yourselves too. But not till then, and I am sure you never will.

[4.] If all this be true, much less can the best grace in this world preserve itself, because at best in itself it is weaker than its adversaries. No sooner is grace put into the heart, than all the powers of hell are in arms against it, and would murder the new-born heavenly nature. Now it being a creature weak and imperfect, it cannot be so powerful in operation, as to resist the force of a stronger being, and a subtle and insinuating adversary. Were there no devils to assault, I do not understand how this principle, so weak in itself, could make head against the deceitfulness of our own hearts. It is the Spirit steps in to quell those destroyers, and brood upon his own work in the soul. What? Was it Peter's strength, or God's grace in him, that made the difference between him and Judas? between Paul and the rest of the persecuting Pharisees? It is from God's faithfulness that we are established and kept from evil: "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you and keep you from evil," 2 Thess. iii. 3. If God, not ourselves; it is true, we will, but God works that will in us. We work, but the grace of God

* Rutherford.

works that work in us, and for us. If by grace we are what we are, it is by grace we do what we do, and that of God's good pleasure, not our merit. Our sufficiency is of God, not of ourselves. Our fruitfulness depends upon our abiding in Christ. What can dust and ashes do against principalities and powers? What man is able without the grace of God to wrestle with an experienced devil? A smoking flax would quickly be blown out or expire after a little blaze, if God did not cherish it; a bruised reed would be trod in the dirt, if he did not secure it. A gracious man depends upon God as the steel doth upon the loadstone in the air, which if once separated will be carried down with its own weight, and be reduced to a motion proper to its nature. If God should withdraw his grace from us, the grace in us would not preserve us from falling as low as hell; for of itself it is far more insufficient to preserve us, than the strength which angels and Adam had was to preserve them. We are preserved not by any inherent power in ourselves, but by the constant touches of God upon our wills, whereby he keeps our wills fixed to him.

Let not then our free-will usurp the praise which is due only to God's grace. 1. There is danger in it. To ascribe thy standing or victory to thyself, is a forerunner to some deplorable fall. When we confide too much in ourselves, God leaves us to our own foolish confidence, to reduce us to our proper dependence on him. Peter's boasting of the power of his own grace, was a just cause of his being left to himself, that he might be sensible of his own weakness, and the true ground of his security. If we do fall, it is not for want of faithfulness in God, but for want of thankfulness in us. 2. It is

our sin. So much as we ascribe anything to our own strength, so much we rob grace of its glory. We provoke the Lord to jealousy, who will not have the glory due to his name, ascribed to the creature. 3. The contrary is our advantage. The acknowledgment of our dependence on God is the way to be preserved; the more we give God the glory of his grace, the more will he give us the comfort of it.

(7.) Let the falls of others who seemed stronger than you, make you more thankful, and more compassionate. If they make you more thankful, they will make you more compassionate. Though you may be engraven with more lively characters of God's image, and in a higher manner like to God, yet grace is to be acknowledged that kept temptations from overcoming you. Let not your pride, but your praise take encouragement from thence. Think not yourselves better, because you are victorious while others are defeated, but God more gracious to you. The continuance of his assisting grace was the cause of your success, as the withdrawing of it was the cause of the other's defeat. If this too much natural corruption be indulged, it is a ground to fear we may shortly be successors in the like fault, or a worse.

Be more compassionate to others: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," Gal. vi. 1. Let the faults of others teach us to exercise the grace of humility in our hearts, and carriage towards them. Make not the breach wider by our censures, which is too wide already by Satan's power. Restore with meekness, not proud censoriousness; by

a dove-like meekness like that of our Saviour; the case may shortly be our own, and we may stand in need of his assistance for our restoration. To pity or help a gracious man in such a case, is to assist Christ in his charge, and be his seconds in his combat against the devil, and will be kindly accepted by him. God commanded in the law to help a beast, if any one saw it in a ditch. It is unnatural to let an infant lie on the ground and not lend a hand to lift it up; much more to let an infant grace, the birth of God, and charge of Christ, to lie grovelling in the earth by the power of sin.

(8.) Despise not therefore small grace in any. Is Christ to have a special regard to smoking flax and bruised reeds? Is it fit we should be of a temper contrary to our Saviour, in despising that which God hath ordered him to regard? Must that be the object of our laughter, which is the object of Christ's tenderest care? Is that to be the subject of our scorn, which is one of the chief parts of his commission to take care of? Can he be thought to be regenerate, who is of a disposition so contrary to Him who ought to be his pattern? If God's soul be well pleased with Christ's care of small grace, he must abominate any temper so opposite to his own, and that of his Son. It is a pride and a scorn like to that of devils, not a spirit like that of God. As the least sin in others must not draw our affection, so the weakest grace in others must not lie under our contempt. Would you tread upon a diamond because it is little, or slight a star bigger than the whole earth, because it seems a little twinkling spark in your eye? Let us look to it then, that we disesteem not that in another, which is of more worth than the whole mass

of the ungracious world. It is a gallant disposition not to be offended with that smoke which doth not offend the Redeemer's eye.

(9.) Stand fast. Leave not off till you gain a full victory; till judgment be brought forth to victory. It is necessary. He that is not at last victorious, was never any soldier under Christ's pay, or inspired with Christ's spirit. Men may think they stand fast, and are in a prosperous way to victory, when they are not: "Wherefore let him that thinks he standeth fast, take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12. There must therefore be much watchfulness and wariness used. Though this doctrine stands firm, yet such exhortations must be used. The word of Christ to Peter, "that his faith should not fail," was as firm as a rock, yet: "He saith unto Peter, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," Matt. xxvi. 40, 41. He stirs him up particularly to his watchful guard, though there were two others besides, that had not that assurance from his mouth, that their faith should not fail, as Peter had. Paul promiseth the Corinthians, in the name of God, that God would not suffer them to be tempted above measure, 1 Cor. x. 13. Must they therefore stand idle, and suffer themselves to be carried down the stream of a temptation, and leave God wholly to do his work? No, he draws an argument from this promise to exhort them to their duty; "Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry," ver. 14; flee, not creep, not go, not walk. Promises are not to encourage our laziness, but to quicken our industry. Let not the charge then brought against Ephraim fall upon us, that "our goodness is like the morning dew," Hos. vi. 8. When men begin in the Spirit, and end in

the flesh, the end will be both dreadful and shameful. An eternal crown is entailed upon a constant faithfulness. Our running in a race near to the end will be of no avail, if then our antagonist get the start of us. It is by this constancy we come nearest the name of God, which is, "I am that I am," unchangeable in perfections, and immutable in goodness. Our actions should be suitable to the reward promised, which is not for a day or two, but for eternity. We must hold on and wrestle, till we get the blessing. Without continuance we lose our pains, and the fruit of them, our crown. Run not slowly; but that you may obtain, let your eye be upon the crown, you will never else run swiftly, because not cheerfully. But withal, means must be used, to stand fast in grace and gain a victory. God doth not preserve a christian by force, or compel him to keep his standing as he doth establish the earth, or the heavens, but by rational means, by promises and precepts suitable to the condition of a rational and voluntary agent, and proposing effective and alluring arguments to encourage him in his course; yet he leaves not the success barely to this, and the operation of our own wills, but attends it with the supernatural power of his Spirit, suitable to the manner of our first conversion, which was not by violence, but by the proposals of the gospel, and the salvation promised in it, wherein a secret power of the Spirit was exerted upon the heart, enlightening the mind, and inclining the will, and drawing it with the cords of a man in a way of love, to a compliance with the gospel promise. So likewise in the preservation and progress of grace, there is still a secret working of the Spirit of God with outward

exhortations, and admonitions to perseverance; thereby keeping up the new habit, and new heart in us, quickening it by outward means and rational ways, suited to the judgment and reason of the new creature; and thus keeping his hand upon the will, he moves it to those ends, for which he first touched it, and draws it on from one degree unto another, till it comes to perfection.

Therefore we must not make use of this doctrine to neglect the means God hath appointed for the establishing and completing of grace; since God acts with us as rational creatures, we are not only passive but active subjects in this work. John assures the believers, that the unction in them should preserve them from soul-destroying errors. There is this passive perseverance: "As it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him," 1 John ii. 27. Must they therefore be careless? No; He backs it with duty on their parts. Wherefore "my little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence," ver. 28; abide in him, who certainly abides in you. There is scarcely a promise in the whole book of God to encourage us, but is somewhere or other attended with a precept to quicken us.

Use the following means.

[1.] Look well to sincerity. This is the blood and vital spirit, which runs through the veins of every grace, without which it is not what it seems to be; faith is not faith, unless it be unfeigned, and what may seem to be love, is not so, unless it be sincere. Sincerity is that principle in the heart which complies with the quickening grace of God, as the vital spirit in a plant doth with the beams of the sun, which doth not only make it stand, but

grow against the injuries of the weather. It was God's manner long ago to have a special respect to sincerity: "Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doer," Job viii. 20. He will not despise or turn away himself. If a sincere man falls, he will reach out his hand to lift him up, as the antithesis manifests; the word being in the Hebrew, he will not take the evil doer by the hand, implying, that he doth hold the other, and raise him up. It is our sincerity in withstanding the sins and temptations of the world, that the promise of perfect sanctification is made to: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white," Rev. iii. 4, 5; they shall be clothed in white. An allusion to the Jewish custom of admitting the priests into their office, by clothing them with white, as a badge of their office, and continuance in the priesthood. Job held fast his integrity, Job ii. 3; and that was a means to preserve and recover him. Uncompounded things are least subject to putrefaction, whereas mixed bodies easily ferment and corrupt; sincerity can never be feeble, because the spirit of power always attends it: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i. 7. The apostle couples them both together. A single respect to Christ in the midst of shaking persecution, is both an evidence of the strong touch of the heart by the Spirit, and a preservative against apostasy; as the standing right of the needle in the compass, in the midst of the winds which toss the ship, manifests its powerful touch by the loadstone, and is a means to direct it in its course, and preserve it from a wreck.

[2.] Get a stock of spiritual knowledge, and actuate it often. The grave considerate christian will stand, when the hot-headed professor, like horses of the same temper, will be jaded and sink under the rider in a few miles. Men whose religion consists rather in a commotion of their passions, than a judicious and considerate determination of their wills, will quickly flag; hot beginners are not durable; violent motions, either in naturals or morals, are not perpetual; get the experience of every truth you hear. Experimental knowledge is the true ballast of the soul, when mere sound and air is a rolling and movable thing. Mere head professors are as light as a cork, dancing upon every dash of water; an experimental taste of the grace of God, namely, that grace of Christ which produceth a coming to him, is a means to be built up a spiritual house: "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," 1 Pet. 2—5. It must be a taste, not only the hearing of a sound; it is not enough to be sound in judgment, but spiritual in taste, Col. i. 23. Skilful musicians, who understand the delicacy of the airs in a tune, will chain their ears to the sound, when an unskilful person will listen, and stare awhile, and run away. Our esteem of God is according to the degrees of our knowledge; and our cleavings to him, according to the degrees of our estimation of him. Actuate it often; let thy knowledge sink down to thy will, and lie ready by thee, to bring forth new and old upon any exigency. The forgetting the precepts and promises of God, is the cause of fainting, Heb. xii. 5: "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation," Isa. xxxiii. 6. As this makes the kingdom of Christ stable in the

world, so it will the kingdom of grace in our souls. Get therefore, and actuate a knowledge of the tenour of the covenant, the substance of the promises, the nature and ends of Christ's mediation: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ," 2 Tim. ii. 1, 3. Have a right understanding of the covenant of grace, which is manifested in and by Christ, of the stock of grace stored up in Christ. This will make you endure hardship as the soldiers of Christ; this will make you high-spirited in the acting of your faith, and please before God, without which, both your faith and prayers will be very faint and languishing.

[3.] Rest not in small degrees of grace. It is true, weak grace will keep close to Christ; Philadelphia with her little strength kept Christ's words, Rev. iii. 8; yet that pretended grace which always remains in the same posture, may well be suspected as a counterfeit. He that stands at a stay in what he supposeth to be grace, never had grace in truth. It is impossible any thing should be without its essential properties, and it is an essential property of grace to grow, it would not else be the seed of God, and an immortal principle. He that hath grace, finds such a pleasure and excellency in it, that he can have but little acquiescence in himself without exercise of it. If you do not strengthen your grace, you will make way to strengthen your doubts. Though weak grace will carry a man to heaven, it will be just as a small and weak vessel surprised by a shattering storm, which, though it may get to the shore, yet with excessive hardships and fears; such will sail through a stormy sea, and have a daily contest with stormy doubts, ready to overset their hopes; whereas, a stout ship, well

rigged, will play with the waves in the midst of a tempest, and at last pass through all difficulties, without many fears, into its haven. We are not perfect here, perfection is a title peculiar to the blessed: "The spirits of just men made perfect," Heb. xii. 23. Yet we must press forward towards it, to attain the resurrection of the dead, Phil. iii. 11; that is, such a perfection of holiness as shall be the state of glorified souls. When this is our mark, we shall have a further progress in the degrees of grace, and by that means be nearer to a complete victory. Though a man cannot reach the sun in shooting, yet if he aim at it, his arrow will rise higher than if he aimed at a shrub.

Well then, let our aims be at the highest degrees. He is so far from gaining strength who doth not aspire to a further conquest, that he is in danger to be beaten out of what he hath, and lose the things which he hath wrought. To take up our rest beneath it is a sign, that neither the hatred of sin our enemy, nor the love of God our Friend, were ever sincere and well rooted. Not to arrive at a complete victory, is our weakness; not to aspire to it, is our sin; for it answers not the design of Christ's coming, which was not only that we might have life spiritual and eternal, but an abounding life: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," John x. 10. Not a decreasing life, or one that stands at a stay.

[4.] Study much your exemplar and copy. That hope whereby we expect to become like to Christ in an eternally happy state, must be formed by no lower copy than that of Christ himself: "He that hath this hope," that is, to see him as he is,

"purifies himself as he is pure," 1 John iii. 3; not as the saints are pure, as Abraham, Noah, Job, Daniel. He that steers himself only by the lower exemplars, will be more subject to an imperfect resemblance, and to fail, than he who endeavours to form his soul and life according to the original. He that sets the best copy to imitate, will exceed others who propose lower patterns, though he may not yet come near the original. The apostle directs us to study Christ much, who is the foundation of our standing: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds," Heb. xii. 3. Consider him as the author and finisher of your faith, consider him in his patience on the cross, despising the shame, and the success of his heroic temper, and this will inspire you with a holy courage under the contradictions of corruptions and temptations against your grace. This is our duty: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Matt. v. 48. Christ himself commands it, when he exhorts them to mount above publicans in their duty, and not to conform themselves to the low patterns of the world. Some translate it, "You shall be perfect;" enforcing thereby the strength of the command; as men when they would impose anything by the stress of their authority, say, *You shall* do such a thing, instead of saying, *Do* such a thing. Be as resolute and vigorous in all your duties to God, as he is in all his notes of mercy and goodness to you.

[5.] Be conscientious in the performance of holy duties. A fire which for a while shoots up to heaven, will faint both in its heat and brightness, without fresh supplies of nourishing matter. Bring

fresh wood to the altar, morning and evening, as the priests were bound to do for the nourishment of the holy fire, Lev. v. 12. God in all his promises supposeth the use of means. When he promised Hezekiah his life for fifteen years, it cannot be supposed that he should live without eating and exercise. It is both our sin and misery to neglect the means. Therefore let a holy and an humble spirit breathe in all our acts of worship. If we once become listless to duty, we shall quickly become lifeless in it. If we languish in our duties, we shall not long be lively in our graces. The loss of the appetite is a sign of the loss of health. If we would flourish, we must drink of those waters which spring up to everlasting life. If we desire our leaves should prosper, we should often plant ourselves by the rivers of waters; we must be where the sun shines, the dews drop, and the Spirit blows. If you find yourselves growing into a slothful temper, check it betimes, and recall to your minds the pleasure you have had in your lively and warm converses with God in any duty, and how delightful afterwards, both the beauty and comfort of your graces were. Liveliness in action is a sign of the continuance of health; and liveliness in duty, an evidence of the continuance of grace. Let them all be performed in the strength of Christ. It is not means or ordinances which bring judgment to victory, but Christ in them.

Attend upon the word and sacraments. As the word was the seed whence grace did spring, so it is the channel through which strength and nourishment is conveyed. It is the seed whereby we are begotten, 1 Pet. i. 23, and the milk whereby we are nourished, 1 Pet. ii. 2. If the appetite for our

spiritual food grow weak, the vigour of our grace will quickly begin to gasp.

Be diligent in prayer. This is the chief duty, and that which makes all others more vigorous in their tendency to their end. Our Saviour breathes out strong cries, though he had the strongest assurances of a victorious success, Heb. v. 7. Promises of perseverance should be the guides of our prayers. We may pray most comfortably for that which we are sure to speed in. The Spirit which is sent to comfort us in our fears of miscarrying, is a Spirit of supplication, as well as a Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. Where it is most a Spirit of grace, it will be also most a Spirit of supplication. To talk of a gracious man that neglects prayer, is as great nonsense as to tell us of a living man that doth not breathe. We, in all our distresses, make our application to those that have power in their hands. It is God only draws us to Christ, and keeps us with him. It is Christ who is ordered to bring forth judgment unto victory; to him therefore we must be petitioners; he gives us first the grace of desire, that he may with the more honour confer the mercy he intends us. Our Saviour sets us a pattern, in praying to the Father to preserve and keep us, John xvii. We must not therefore be negligent in our desires of it, or distrustful of the success; especially when we have encouragements by Christ's petition for the same thing, who was never denied by his Father any request for his people. You have many arguments to use: "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us," Psa. lxviii. 28. Let thy power preserve what thy power did work. It is as much to the glory of thy omnipotent love to second thy own work with thy own strength, as

it was to begin it. To what purpose, O God, wert thou pleased to work it, if thou wilt not maintain it? The arguments of God's glory are most prevalent. They were so in the mouth of Moses; plead the same believingly, and thou wilt find the same success. It is for the glory of God you should be victorious. "He which establisheth us with you is God," 1 Cor. i. 21. Shall we think to stand without seeking to the Author of our standing? And that you may pray boldly, believe it to be a thing belonging to you by virtue of Christ's purchase as well as your reconciliation and adoption. If you can but pray, you are sure to succeed in the conquest. And you can never want pleas for standing, till God cancel the bond of his everlasting covenant, and depose Christ from his office of an Advocate. Plead these then. God cannot deny his own bond, nor resist the exercise of an office of his own erecting.

[6.] Exercise grace much. Graces, as soldiers well exercised, are more fit to engage an invading enemy. Muster them up often, and see thy strength; but behold it with humility, prayer, and thankfulness. Living bodies grow stronger by moderate exercise; and many things grow rusty and unfit for want of use. Graces are compared to armour, Eph. vi. and armour is the better for use. Frequent blowing up this fire will make it stronger in itself, and more comfortable to us.

Notice the following graces.

Faith. It was by faith that out of weakness the ancient worthies were made stronger, Heb. xi. 24. It was this made Abraham the father of the faithful, and it will make all the children mighty men of valour, Rom. iv. 24. It is a mighty expression:

"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him; in those that hope in his mercy," Psa. cxlvii. 11. As if the delight and content of his being were maintained by this grace. He takes pleasure in relieving, and pleasure in supporting them. Mercy cannot be so hard-hearted, as to deny assistance to that faith which clings about it: should God do so, he would cast off his pleasure. You can never offend him by the straitest clasping, or pain him with too close embraces. The faster you hold him, the less power will in-dwelling sin, or watchful Satan, have to drag you from him; for the more you hold him, the more he holds you; you do not only apprehend him, but are apprehended by him. A sling and stone, with faith in the name of the Lord, will be more successful to pierce the head of Goliath, with his whole army of Philistines, than if you did march clothed with Saul's armour. Faith will do more than all the arms and ammunition of moral philosophy, so much furbished and trimmed up in our day. It is to faith all the victorious acts of a christian, through the whole scriptures, are ascribed. Faith quencheth the fiery darts of the devil, faith purifies the heart from inward corruptions, faith wrestles with principalities and powers, faith gets the victory over the world, faith preserves us by engaging God's power for us, and faith in all this contest never leaves us, till it lands us in heaven. It is the prime piece in the christian armour whereby we gain the victory, and therefore there is such an emphasis set upon it, as if though a man had all the rest, and wanted this, he would be foundered in all his attempts: "Above all, taking the shield of faith," Eph. vi. 16. As if all other pieces though very gallant and strong, were nothing to

this, to keep off the darts of the enemy. It is a grace worthy the exercise; other graces may fail, and the soul recover; but if faith fail, all is gone. The acting of all our graces depends upon the strength and acting of our faith. The stronger our faith, the greater our stability; the weaker our faith, the more tottering our standing. If the soul could at the first go out to God in acts of faith, when its corruptions had the first blow given them, and found success, much more encouragement hath it to launch out to Christ, and renew the same faith, since the wounds upon its lusts are both more numerous and deeper.

Patience. I mean not patience under afflictions, but a patient waiting; there is need of patience to uphold us in a course of obedience, and need of it also to strengthen our expectations of reward: "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise," Heb. x. 36. God in the course of his providence seems sometimes to turn the back of his promise upon us; there is need of a patient waiting, till it turn again, and march towards us. He sometimes lets loose the devil upon us, and then we fear the waters will swallow up our souls, and that our spiritual enemies will utterly defeat us; there is need of patience till God pulls back the chain whereby he holds our enemy. Christ accomplisheth the most glorious things by degrees. As he doth not give all grace in a moment, so he doth not perfect it in a moment. Patience must endure in the whole military exercise. We cannot lay it aside till we gain the victory. It is as necessary as faith to entitle us to the inheritance of the promises of perseverance and victory.—"through faith and patience inherit

the promises," Heb. vi. 12. Without it we cannot believe in hope against hope; without it we can never run our race, Heb. xii. 1.

Love. Love adds weight to the soul, and suffers not the affections easily to be divorced from the endeared object. The holy angels are fixed in their standing by grace as the principal cause, by the purity of their love as the internal principle. An intelligent and purified love will not forsake a choice object. The iron, mixed with drossy particles, runs not so quick, nor sticks so close to the loadstone, as the refined and best tempered steel. Men embrace not the truth as truth, for want of faith, and they fall from it for want of love: they receive not the love of the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 10. They receive the truth, but not the love of the truth. The purer our love, the faster we shall stick to that Rock which is our strength. God is the strength of those that love him: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength," Psa. xviii. 1.

Humility. God gives grace to the humble; then surely the greatest supplies of grace in our deepest exercises of humility. We should find the very workings of God's grace more powerful in us, in the very exercises of this grace. Christ finds those most strangers to him, that are most proud of themselves. He that is not sensible of his own weakness, is never likely to have recourse to another for strength. To trust in our grace, is to make our grace a god, because the principal object of the creature's trust is God, and it belongs to him to be so, as the highest good. Now to make our inherent grace the chief object of our trust, is to own it to be as good as God, and as sufficient as God to keep its standing. A conceit of our strength may make

us seem stronger, but in reality it makes us weaker. All the humours in the soul run to the boil of pride. Fearfulness of ourselves is a good prologue to firm confidence in God; it will make us more strongly lay hold of his power, and more earnestly plead his faithfulness. Exercise it most after the conquest of a temptation; then it is our time to take heed of spiritual pride, we may else overcome one temptation, and sink under another. Pride after a victory gives the enemy an opportunity of success, upon a new assault with a fresh recruit. Humility is as necessary to preserve us after a conquest, as faith was to arm and strengthen us for it.

[7.] Frequently renew settled and holy resolutions. A soldier unresolved to fight, may easily be defeated. True and sharpened courage treads down those difficulties which would triumph over a cold and wavering spirit. Resolution in a weak man will perform more than strength in a coward. The weakness of our graces, the strength of our temptations, and the diligence of our spiritual enemies, require strong resolutions. We must be stedfast and unmovable, and this will make us abound in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Abundant exercise in God's work will strengthen the habit of grace, increase our skill in the contest, and make the victory more easy and pleasant to us. Let them be believing, humble resolutions in the strength of God's grace, with a jealousy of yourselves; not a vaunting resolution in the strength of your own wills; a fear of ourselves, but confidence in God. David bound himself to God with a hearty vow, depending upon his strength: "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments," Psa. cxix. 106. "I have sworn," &c.

but not in his own strength, for, ver. 107, he desires God to quicken him, and to accept the free-will offerings of his mouth, ver. 108, that is, the oath which proceeded from a free and resolved will. God will not slight, but strengthen the affectionate resolutions of his creature. We cannot keep ourselves from falling, if we first keep not our resolutions from flagging.

[8.] Look often back upon your state under convictions, and the first state of conversion. Measure your present condition by your former temper. Cast up your accounts often, and see whether you thrive or decay; and renew your former dispositions. It is our Saviour's counsel: "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and do the first works," Rev. ii. 5, which cannot be done without reflection upon thy wonted delight in God, thy desires for him, and the sweet communications dispensed by him. Inquire into the cause of thy decay. This is a necessary attendant upon this act of remembrance; for it is not a bare simple act of memory Christ commands, but a diligent inquisition by a practical remembrance. A timely observance of the cause of our loss, will prevent many future ones; without this act, the devil will creep in and finish his business before we are aware. It is a pleasure to reflect upon the time of danger wherein we have been, and to recount the methods God used in our deliverance, and the resolutions we then entertained: "Thine heart shall meditate terror," Isa. xxxiii. 18; that is, Thou shalt consider what thy troubles were, what the frame of thy heart was, what terrors thou hadst in thy distress: for it is spoken of the gospel times, when they shall see the King in his beauty. So likewise it is useful to

recall to our memory what desires, what fervency in prayer, what holy vows there were in, and upon us, when we were under a wounded spirit, and to act the same fervours over again. This would restore and inflame the heart more in duty, and strengthen thee for the contest, by calling into thy assistance the supplies of all the habitual grace thou hast had since those first heats. Remember then the strength of your hungering and thirsting after the word; how your zeal did glow, what sprightliness in your affections, with what devotion your prayers were winged, with what vigour your faith did breathe, how high it did climb, with what detestation you entertained the motions to sin, with what courage you entered into the lists of temptations, how quick and nimble your obedience was, what a freshness and verdure was upon all your graces. Remember these, and do the same works.

[9.] Cherish any breathing of the Spirit. Man is unable to keep his knowledge and evangelical impressions upon himself without the Spirit: "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us," 2 Tim. i. 14. If we can not keep the knowledge and form of sound words agreeable to that affection in man whereby he desires knowledge, much less can we preserve grace in us, which is more opposed by corrupt nature. Men have a natural desire to know, but no natural desire to be gracious. Christ promised the Spirit to abide with us, and shall we slight his harbingers which come to prepare the way for a more powerful residence? We can never prize the assistance of the Holy Ghost, if we neglect the auxiliary force he sends us. Those heavenly motions are the Spirit's orders. How can we ex-

pect to gain the victory, when we neglect the directions and conduct of our great General? Perseverance is no more to be ascribed to our own wills, than our first conversion. As, without the Spirit, we could never by the power of our own wills turn to God, so without the continuance of his efficacy, the will would never keep with God, but would start from him. We are forgetful creatures, therefore need a monitor; stupid creatures, therefore need a quickener. The main reason of our falls is a non-attendance to those motions; for we cannot ascribe them to the Spirit's carelessness, but our own. We cannot suppose him negligent in his office, but ourselves in our duty. Grace cannot live, if you neglect this oil put into the lamp to preserve it from expiring. The Spirit's motions are the medicine he uses for the removal of that which endangers the health of our grace, and cordials to strengthen the languishing spiritual nature to a recovery of itself. Neglect him not therefore, but when you find him turning his back, withdrawing his motions, and beginning to grieve, do what you can to delight him. Beg, pray, cry, with an holy imitation of David: "Lord, take not thy Holy Spirit from me," Psa. li. 11.

[10.] Take frequent views of glory. A heavenly conversation will quicken our graces, enliven our duties; while the vigour of both is kept up, the heart cannot flag in the ways of God. Can a man be lazy in a duty, when he considers he must pray, hear, meditate, walk for heaven? The heat of our graces will be purer and more durable, when we approach nearest and lie closest under the sunbeams. Glory in the eye will encourage grace in the heart, and quicken a resolution against temptations,

and contempt of the foolish pleasures and enticements of the world, as the glory set before Christ made him despise the shame of the cross.

I might add more. 1. Look to the first flagging of thy heart, thy first remissness in religious duties. Slothful proceedings become not fervent beginnings. 2. Be much in the duty of mortification. Shake off every weight that may weaken thee in thy course, Heb. xii. 1. Those that are to run a race, or go to a battle, carry not burdens with them. 3. Entertain wise considerations of the worst that may happen in your christian course. Prepare against the worst, though it may never come upon you. Consider the fury of persecutors, the diligence of the devil, the multitude of temptations, and what promises are suited to elevate you above them. 4. Remember the promise. This will still us in our wavering: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: for he is faithful that promised," Heb. x. 23.

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Charnock, Stephen, 1628-168
Christ crucified, and Weal
[London] Religious Tract So
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